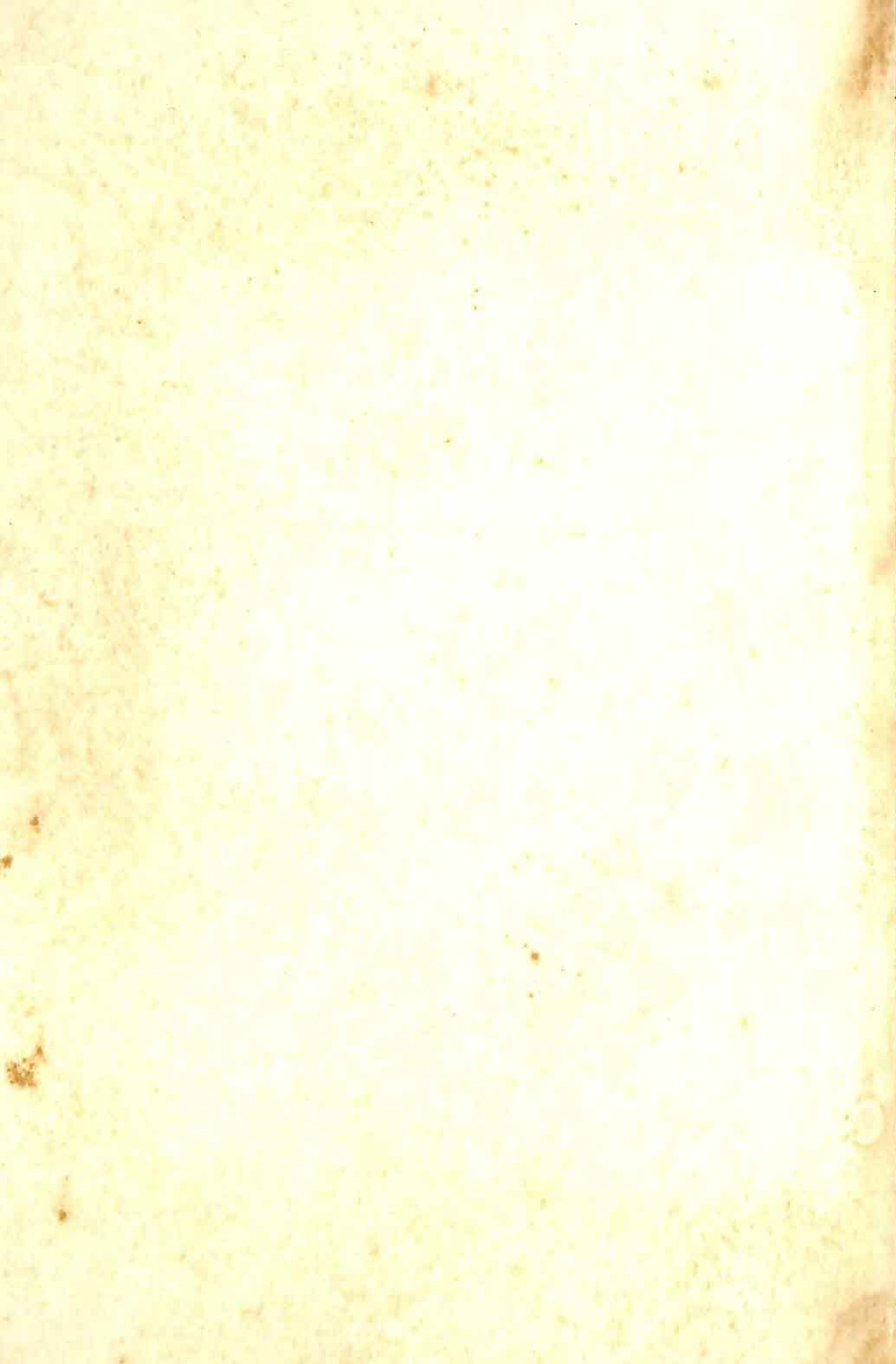


cases
and
comments

STUDENT TEACHING

Elizabeth Hunter
Edmund Amidon



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Student Teaching

CASES AND COMMENTS

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Elizabeth Hunter

HUNTER COLLEGE

Edmund Amidon

TEMPLE UNIVERSITY

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STUDENT TEACHING: CASES AND COMMENTS is a book designed for those who are preparing for student teaching, those who are currently engaged in student teaching, and those who are concerned with learning from past student teaching experiences. The cases in the book are about college students who are preparing to teach in the grades from kindergarten through high school. The students become involved in the kinds of situations they will encounter before, during, and after student teaching; that is, from the time they decide to major in education until the time they accept their first teaching positions.

Each case is accompanied by comments that establish the problem (or problems) raised in the case, point up relevant issues, and provide questions that are intended to lead to fruitful thought about alternative courses of action. Cases as instructional materials are particularly well suited to group discussion and analysis, and the comments following each case are designed to facilitate thoughtful group exchange of ideas as well as reflective material for the individual reader.

There is wide agreement among educators that the student teaching experience is of great importance in the preparation of teachers. As student teaching programs are strengthened, teachers will be better prepared for their work with children. The authors hope that this book can strengthen student teaching experiences by helping students grow in their understanding of and ability to deal with a wide variety of educational and professional problems, while specifically improving their teaching skills.

The authors have been concerned with the improvement of teacher education for a number of years, and between them have had experiences as student teacher, classroom teacher, cooperating teacher, college supervisor, coordinator of laboratory experiences and student teaching, and teacher of undergraduate and graduate courses in education. This book, *Student Teaching: Cases and Comments*, has been written from these experiences.

E.H.

E.A.

February 1964

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Student Teaching

CASES AND COMMENTS

Introduction

THE STUDENT TEACHING EXPERIENCE is generally recognized by educators as being an important part of teacher preparation—some would say the *most* important. It is the time of working directly with children in the classroom under the guidance of a regular classroom teacher, usually called the cooperating teacher because he cooperates with the college in the task of preparing future teachers. Student teaching is commonly looked back upon by teachers as that part of their education which had the most effect upon the kind of teacher they have become.

Because student teaching is so important, you will want to do as much as you can to make the experience one that is worthwhile. If you are reading this book before your student teaching experience, it can help you over some of the hurdles before you; if you are reading this during your student teaching, it can help you deal with some of the problems you are meeting in your classroom; and if you are reading this book after having completed your student teaching, you can be helped to reflect upon that experience in ways that will prove useful to you in your first teaching position.

This book deals with cases of student teaching experiences, and also with some pre- and poststudent teaching experiences. The cases are divided into seven chapters. The first chapter presents some of the problems that can arise from selecting education as a major, and being assigned to student teaching. The second, third, and fourth chapters describe student teachers at work with children, with members of the school staff, and with members of the college staff. The fifth chapter tells of rela-

tionships with parents, while the last two chapters deal with final evaluations of the student teaching performance, and with finding a teaching position.

The cases in the book present accounts of real happenings, and the purpose of these cases is to describe problem situations that will provoke thought and lead to a variety of defensible solutions. There is seldom one best answer to problems that involve people, and it is hoped that these cases will help you to see events from a variety of viewpoints. If you are currently involved in student teaching, or have already completed your student teaching, you will have similar experiences of your own to draw upon. However, cases have the advantage of removing you from the immediacy of your own problems, and thus they can be regarded with more objectivity. As a result you will perceive and understand more of the ramifications present in the case situation than you do when you are directly involved.

Each case is accompanied by comments, which are divided into three sections. The first section attempts to pinpoint the problem or problems in the case. Next, basic issues of general educational significance are raised. And finally there are questions designed to help you propose (and defend) alternate courses of action that are appropriate to the specific case. It is hoped that you will discuss the cases with other students in either formal class situations or informal discussion groups, because cases are particularly designed to facilitate the interchange of ideas. However, we believe that you will also benefit from individual reading and reflection.

The cases cover a wide variety of situations relating to the student teaching experience, but no attempt is made to cover every eventuality. In education, as in any field dealing with human beings, this is an impossibility. The aim of the book is to help you solve problems that may arise whether they be expected or unforeseen—in other words, to help you learn.

I

Before
Student Teaching

WHY DOES a person decide to become a teacher? Some college students have known since they were small children that they wanted to teach. Others decide upon teaching because of the influence of a teacher in elementary or high school, or because their parents want them to become teachers, or because they think it will be pleasant to have summers free. This list could be expanded to great length because there are many reasons for deciding upon teaching, just as there are many reasons for deciding upon any career.

For another complex of reasons, teacher education and the teaching profession is looked up to by some and down upon by others. College students who plan to become teachers should be able to deal intelligently with education's detractors, and the first case in this chapter discusses some of the issues in this area.

After deciding upon teaching as a profession, one is usually required to spend some time in a classroom, participating in what is called student teaching. Placement in the schools often causes some student apprehensions, and the second case deals with some of these fears. And sometimes students, or even their parents, believe that they should be changed to a different school for student teaching, and the third case tells of such an instance.

Yes, deciding to become a teacher can raise problems, but for the interested, sincere, and capable person, the rewards can be plentiful.

CASE 1

On Becoming an Educator

THE SOPHOMORE CLASS was having its annual picnic, and a group of Dyson University students were chatting in the warm May sun.

"Does everybody know that next Friday is the last day for declaring a major?" asked Donna York. "I can't decide whether to major in English and minor in psychology, or major in psychology and minor in English. I think I want to work in an advertising agency when I graduate."

"Why not just toss a coin," suggested Brenda Dillon. "Don't laugh—I do that all the time. You see, if you're disappointed in the results, then you know you should have made the other choice, and you just change! It's a foolproof method for making decisions."

Don Egan joined in, "I've known since I received my first chemistry set in fourth grade that I wanted to be a chemist—so I have no decision problems. I'm going to concentrate on chemistry and math."

"I'm electing education," said Joe Garson, "and so is Grace. We've decided that we want to teach."

"Education! You must be out of your minds!" came from Donna. "How can anyone like you major in education? I'm amazed at both of you! Nobody with any brains would pick education."

"What you say isn't true, Donna," came the rejoinder from Grace. "I know some very bright kids in the ed department—so do you. And I *want* to be a teacher."

"Maybe the ed department does have a few good students, but I bet they don't have many. How will you be able to stand it? The courses are so boring—why education isn't even a respectable discipline. Everyone knows that."

"Education isn't boring," replied Joe. "I took Introduction to Education this semester and we discussed some of the kinds of

things you're saying. For one thing, a study at this university showed that education majors were at least the academic equal of students in the College of Liberal Arts. And education is a respectable discipline with an important subject matter, which you obviously don't know a thing about."

"Oh yes I do. I have a friend at home who's majoring in education and I see what she does in that 'respectable discipline.' She makes flash cards and charts, collects pictures, learns to print, and engages in all kinds of similar stimulating intellectual activities. Well—you don't have to go to college to learn that stuff!"

"That's not the subject matter I'm talking about. I'm talking about who should provide and determine education, and what content ought to be included in the schools in what sequence and in what ways, and what is an educated citizen; and, by the way, how teachers should be educated. I happen to think that these are important matters, worthy of study and thought. And, Donna, you would certainly benefit from an examination of these ideas. You have some half-baked opinions and some stereotyped ideas, but you don't have any information."

"Well, *I* have some information," said Brenda. "And that is that you don't have to study education to be a teacher. Knowing your subject matter is what counts, not all these methods courses you'll have to take. The trouble with most teachers is that they don't know enough about what they're supposed to be teaching, because all they learn is *how* to teach. But they should know their subjects. You'll notice that college teachers don't bother with the 'how.' Look at our instructors here at Dyson. Did they study education?"

"Careful," said Don. "I think that's a point for the other side. I've encountered some pretty poor teaching here, and from teachers who knew their subject matter inside-out. The trouble was that they didn't know how to communicate it to anyone else. I'm in favor of having teachers at all levels learn to present their material so that students feel like learning it."

"Of course teachers should make their subjects interesting," replied Brenda. "But that's not something they can learn. Teach-

ers need enthusiasm and they need to be dynamic also, but those aren't qualities that can be acquired. You either have them or you don't."

"It may be true," countered Grace, "that some people are incapable of ever becoming good teachers, but I believe that teaching skills *can be learned* by most intelligent people. Of course teachers have to know their subject matter—that goes without saying. But they need to know how children learn, and they need to know how to teach—how to communicate to others so that they want to learn, as Don said. And I'm glad, Don, that you said what you did about some of the teachers we've had here. Plenty of them would benefit from a few courses in education. Why some of them aren't even able to construct an intelligent test."

"It really burns me up when people say that the education department is terrible, or that education is not worthy of study, after they take one education course that they don't happen to like, or even when they've never taken any course in education," said Joe. "Every single one of us has probably had a boring course in history or English or math—but we don't then go around condemning those disciplines as worthless."

"I still don't see any point in majoring in education," said Donna. "Oh, I guess it's okay to take a couple of ed courses if you want to teach. But I know lots of people who have taken teaching jobs without majoring in education—and without student teaching, which is really a waste of time. So why bother?"

"For the same reason that a physician bothers to intern before he practices, my dear Donna. Why does everybody think he can teach without any preparation? Education is a profession and it has to be learned like any profession. You never heard of anyone practicing law or medicine or engineering without studying first. Just because you went to school when you were a child you think you can teach. But just because you've been a patient, you don't think you can be a physician."

"Speaking of law," said Ricky White, "I plan to go to law school, but I used to think I'd like to teach high school. Minor in education and teach one of the social sciences. My father had

such a fit, though, when I mentioned it, that I gave up the idea. He has his heart set on my coming into his law practice, and I *am* interested in law—but I always thought I'd like working with high school youngsters. For some reason that I've never been able to fathom, my dad thinks that teaching is kind of a lowly calling. And it isn't just because teachers don't make very much money. I don't quite understand his reasons."

"It certainly is true that teachers don't have very high status in our society, and that's another thing that annoys me," commented Joe. "When somebody gets a job in an advertising agency on Madison Avenue it's supposed to be a big deal. But what exactly does an ad man contribute to society? Compare his contribution to that of a good teacher and you really begin to wonder about some of our values."

"I agree with you that some of our values may not be terribly sound, but I can't help thinking that working on Madison Avenue would be much more exciting than teaching kids," said Brenda.

"But teaching *can* be exciting. We visited a number of classrooms in connection with that Introduction to Education course, and I saw some exciting things going on. In fact, I never really thought about becoming a teacher until I saw how stimulating it could be."

"Okay," Donna made the final comment. "You go ahead and be a teacher. And let's remember this conversation when we come back for our twentieth reunion—or even our tenth. We'll see who's had the most satisfaction, or reward, or made the greatest contribution to society—and I bet it won't be you and Grace with your 'exciting' profession."

COMMENTS

The Problem

A group of sophomore college students are discussing their choice of major, and two students who have decided to elect education find that they have to defend their choice. We know that:

1. One student says that no one with brains would select education as a major, that education is not a respectable discipline and that the courses are boring.
2. A student who has elected education says that the students in education are just as bright as those in the liberal arts college, that education is a discipline with an important and stimulating subject matter, and that the subject matter of any field can be made boring by a boring teacher.
3. Another student claims that knowing subject matter is what counts in teaching, and that methods courses are not necessary. She cites their college teachers, who have not studied how to teach, to back up her arguments. She is answered by a student who says that since he has encountered some pretty poor teaching in college from instructors who knew their subject matter well, her argument may be a point for the other side.
4. The suggestion is made that a teacher's enthusiasm and dynamism is what makes a subject interesting, and these are traits that cannot be acquired.
5. The second student who has elected education replies that teaching skills *can* be learned by most intelligent people, though it goes without saying that knowledge of subject matter is essential.
6. There is some discussion of the low status of the teaching profession in contrast to the contribution of the teacher, and what this reflects about the values of society.

Some Issues

1. What are some of the reasons for the commonly stated view that education is not a respectable discipline, that its subject matter is boring, and that students who elect education are not as clever as those in other departments?
2. Why is it that many people who have never had an education course, or who have had one or two, will condemn

education as useless or repetitive, but will not say this of other disciplines, even when they have had the same experience in that discipline?

3. Can one learn how to teach, or is this something that some people are able to do naturally while others are not? How is it possible to know one's subject matter really well and not be able to communicate it to others? Can a person teach subject matter content to children without thoroughly knowing that content himself?
4. Why do teachers tend to have lower status in our society than many other groups who actually contribute less to society?
5. What can education students do to improve the image of the teaching profession?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Are there other arguments that the students who have decided to major in education might have marshalled to justify their choice?
2. Are there other arguments that the opposition could have mentioned?
3. How might one respond to the final statement in this case?

CASE 2

Worries

SOME STUDENTS from Walter State College were sitting together in the campus coffee shop discussing the student teaching assignments that they had just received.

"I'm glad I'm going to Jackson High," announced Bob Roland. "I hear that the kids are terrific—most of them go on to college. They'll be a real challenge—fortunately."

"You're lucky, Bob," said Beverly Wright. "I'm going to be in a fifth grade at Eastern. The kids there aren't even interested in school. Joan Brown was there last year and I remember that she had a lot of trouble. Why, the children in fourth grade could hardly even read."

"I'm in Eastern, too," Rosilyn Meader joined in, "but I asked to go there. I'm interested in teaching underprivileged kids, and I think they're more of a challenge than the college-bound youngsters you'll be with, Bob. I don't think enough of us want to work with kids who aren't 'easy' to teach, and I think they need good teachers more than any other group. Besides, I don't believe that they aren't interested in learning. It's just that they aren't interested in school, because teachers don't do the right kinds of things with them."

"Maybe you're right," replied Bob. "But I'm interested in my subject matter—math. And I don't want to teach kids who can't even begin to learn the sort of work I'm interested in. Besides, high school is too late to begin to interest kids. And anyway, as long as we have people like you, with a missionary spirit, we're okay."

"The trouble," said Jack Nichols, "is that there aren't enough people like Rosilyn with 'a missionary spirit' as you call it. I can understand how you feel, Bob, but what if you find yourself teaching in a slum school next year. What will you do? You can't teach what the kids can't learn."

"Well, for one thing I won't find myself teaching in a slum school. I'd leave teaching first. But if I did find myself there, I'd teach them high school math. If they can't learn it—too bad. I can't be expected to teach elementary school subjects. If that's what I wanted to do I'd have majored in elementary education instead of mathematics."

"Anyway," said Shirley Dorn, "it's all very nice to talk about interesting these underprivileged children, and helping them, and so forth. But how do you do it? Do you know how, Rosilyn? I think I'd like to work with children whose lives I could affect for the better, but I don't think I know how, and I'm not sure if anyone else does either. I'm going to Eastern too, and frankly

I'm worried about it. I know kids who went there last year, and as far as I can see the only thing they learned was that teaching was hard and unrewarding. Remember in class the time we discussed research which showed that students' attitudes toward children go from positive to negative during student teaching? Well, I think that the attitudes of the student teachers at Eastern become terribly negative. What good is going there if we don't know how to help the kids and if we end up not liking either teaching or children?"

"Well, I'm not worried about the kind of children I'll be teaching," Eleanor Jacobs said, "though perhaps I would be if I were going to Eastern. But I'll be in Dearborn, which is in a middle-class neighborhood. The thing that bothers me is that I asked for a fourth grade and instead I'm going to be in a sixth. I spoke to Dr. Fine about it, but he gave me that stuff about the principles of teaching and learning being the same in every grade, and so forth. Maybe that's true, but the subject matter is different, and I *know* I'm interested in the fourth grade."

"Well, perhaps you'll find that you like the sixth grade so much that you'll want to teach it next year, Eleanor. That's what happened to my sister—she thought she wanted second grade, but she was placed in a fifth and she loved it. Besides fourth grades, or any grades, are different in different schools. But the thing that worries me is student teaching in one grade and then getting a job in a completely different grade."

"As long as everyone's talking about worries, I'll add mine," said Eric Wilson. "The fellow who lived next to me last year had the same cooperating teacher I'm going to have this year, and he couldn't stand her. Said she was straight out of the Dark Ages!"

"You think that's bad! Listen to this. . . ."

COMMENTS

The Problem

A group of students is talking over some apprehensions about student teaching. We know that:

1. Several students worry that teaching underprivileged children is going to be difficult and unrewarding, while another student is looking forward to the experience and believes it will offer a particularly satisfying challenge.
2. One student says that he is only interested in teaching his subject matter to children who will be able to deal with it.
3. A student wishes she had been assigned to the grade she had asked for, while another worries that she may not be able to get a job in the same grade in which she does her student teaching.
4. A student is worried about the cooperating teacher he will have, because of some things another student has said about her.

Some Issues

1. In what ways might children from different groups or social classes require different kinds of experiences?
2. What special training should teachers receive for working with underprivileged children? Are certain types of teachers better able to work with certain types of children?
3. Is it professionally sound for teachers to be more interested in subject matter than children, or more interested in children than subject matter?
4. What are some of the reasons why student teachers should be assigned to the grades and schools that they request?
5. Why is it that student teachers' attitudes about children often become more negative during student teaching?
6. Discuss the pros and cons of student teaching in one grade offering enough experience in the principles of teaching and learning to prepare the student to teach in other grades.

7. What might happen to the relationship between a student teacher and cooperating teacher if one has a preconceived notion of what the other will be like?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What can the student teachers who know they will be teaching children from deprived homes do to prepare themselves to teach these children well?
2. What generally are some actions that students should take once they know the grade and school in which they will be teaching?
3. What are some constructive ways in which these students can deal with the various apprehensions they feel—for instance, what can the student do who thinks that his cooperating teacher is from “the Dark Ages”?
4. How can student teachers keep positive attitudes about children even when working with children who are difficult and rebellious?

CASE 3

Discrimination

DR. ANDERSON, Director of Student Teaching at Central College, was sitting in his office reviewing the various schools in which students had recently been placed for their semester of student teaching, when the phone rang, and the voice at the other end said, “Dr. Anderson? This is Mrs. Jaspers, Marilyn Jaspers’ mother. I called to speak to you about the school in which Marilyn has been placed for student teaching. Now, I don’t mean to interfere, but Mr. Jaspers and I have been concerned about whether P.S. 761 is the best place for Marilyn. Do you know the school?”

"Yes, Mrs. Jaspers, I know both the school and Marilyn's teacher very well, and I can assure you that Marilyn will have an excellent experience in 761 with Mrs. Johns."

"Oh, it isn't the teacher—Marilyn has met Mrs. Johns and speaks highly of her. But frankly, Dr. Anderson, we have some apprehensions about the neighborhood and about the children who attend the school. It isn't that we have any prejudices—we are broad-minded people. In fact, I've had people from that neighborhood doing housework for me for years, and I know that many of them are fine people. And Mr. Jaspers always has a place for them in his business. But we aren't happy about Marilyn teaching in that neighborhood. And since Marilyn's friends seem to be placed in schools right near us in Linton Heights, we thought it would be nice if Marilyn could be changed to be nearer home."

"If you're worried about the neighborhood, Mrs. Jaspers, perhaps you didn't know that Marilyn is one of six student teachers in 761. Marilyn will be able to go to and from school with several other students, so if you're afraid of having her walk on the streets alone, there's nothing to worry about. We've been using that school for years and we've never had difficulty of any kind."

"Well, it isn't just that, Dr. Anderson. It's the whole idea of Marilyn's being in that kind of school. She'll never be teaching in a place like that, so wouldn't she be better off in the sort of school that she'll be working in later on?"

"Mrs. Jaspers," replied Dr. Anderson, "we think it's important for our students to have varied kinds of experiences, and we make a considerable effort to provide them with opportunities to work in different kinds of schools. Marilyn will be in this school for the major part of the semester—perhaps eight or ten weeks—and then she'll be in a different school. Really, Mrs. Jaspers, we have given careful thought to Marilyn's placement in student teaching, and we believe that being in this school will be a particularly valuable experience for her."

"But Marilyn has had experience with these people. I told you that we've had those people working for us ever since

Marilyn was a baby. And Marilyn has heard things about the language of some of the children, and that they are quite tattered, and so forth. Now don't think that Marilyn has complained, or asked me to call you. We just don't think that P.S. 761 is the place to send a girl like Marilyn. It may be all right for some of your students, or perhaps for the young men, but we simply do not want our daughter there."

"I understand some of your feelings, Mrs. Jaspers, but I'm afraid that placement decisions are made by the college—they are not decisions to be made by parents. We match schools and students with care and for a variety of reasons, and we think that Marilyn is well placed. And I might add that I think that Marilyn has arrived at an age when perhaps you should not try to make decisions for her."

"Well, Dr. Anderson, I have tried to be nice about this, but I don't think you are being at all understanding or cooperative. I simply cannot see why Marilyn should be in 761 when her friends are teaching right here in our own neighborhood. Why should Marilyn be discriminated against in this way?"

COMMENTS

The Problem

The mother of a student is disturbed because her daughter has been placed in a school that she considers undesirable. We know that:

1. The mother does not want her daughter to be in a certain school because she will never teach in a school like it, because the children's language is not always socially acceptable, because the neighborhood causes her some apprehensions, and because she thinks her daughter would fit more suitably in a school in their own neighborhood.

2. The Director of Student Teaching believes that the selected school will provide the student with a valuable experience, that the school is not an undesirable one, and that the neighborhood need not cause the parent to be apprehensive.
3. The parent is also told that placement decisions are made with care, are in the hands of the college staff, not parents, and that the student is too old to have her mother make decisions for her.
4. The mother does not see why her daughter should be discriminated against, since so many of her friends are teaching right in their own neighborhood.

Some Issues

1. When, if ever, should parents of college students make known their thoughts and feelings to their children's teachers?
2. Does a college have any responsibility for explaining student teaching placements to parents, especially when students are in difficult neighborhoods?
3. What are the advantages to students in being placed in schools that are different from the ones they attended, and different from the ones in which they plan to teach?
4. Should student teachers know why they have been placed in certain schools if there are specific reasons for the placement?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Should this Director of Student Teaching have been more sympathetic to the parent, and perhaps have changed the student?

2. How else might the Director have explained his reasons for placing this student so that the parent would have accepted them?
3. Should the Director tell the student of her mother's call? Should the mother tell her daughter? If the student is told, what should she do?

II

The Student Teacher
Works
with Children

S.C.E.R.T., West Bengal

Date... 16-3-85

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WHEN COLLEGE STUDENTS become student teachers they are neither all student nor all teacher. They are simply college students who are learning to be teachers, and, often, they encounter problems. Sometimes children do not respond to student teachers as they do to the regular classroom teacher—for instance, children may tend to test the student teacher more. Student teachers, because they are beginners, may have difficulty with subject matter or with methods of teaching subject matter. And because the student is teaching in the classroom of another person, there may be problems that arise because of differing beliefs about teaching.

Even though it is likely that some problems will become apparent during student teaching, the whole purpose of student teaching is to provide help and guidance in dealing with teaching problems before one is in one's own classroom. The cases in this chapter deal with some experiences that student teachers might have with children in their classrooms.

CASE 4

You're Not Our Teacher

DURING BARBARA DAVIS' first week of student teaching in the fifth grade at the Harrison School, her cooperating teacher was unexpectedly called from the room, and Barbara was left alone with children whom she was just beginning to know.

"I'm sorry about this, Barbara," said Mrs. Gleason. "Ordinarily I wouldn't leave you alone, but our first grade teacher is ill, and the substitute just called to say that she'd be delayed for about an hour. You'll be better off staying here than you would be taking over a first grade group whom you've never seen before, so I said that I'd go in there while you cover this class. You know approximately what our morning routine is, and if you have any trouble let the kids read their library books. I'm sure you'll be all right."

Then Mrs. Gleason told the children that Miss Davis would take charge for about an hour while she was out of the room, and she added, "I know that you will cooperate with Miss Davis."

This was Barbara's first student teaching experience, and she really hadn't done much except observe, but she didn't feel worried about taking over. Since her arrival in this fifth grade class she had been impressed with the capability and independence of the children.

The opening exercises went easily—the children took charge, as they always did. Then Barbara began with the plans for the day, using the materials that Mrs. Gleason had left on her desk. She decided to write them on the board without discussion. The children watched quietly until she came to "outdoor play." Then several children said, "No, that's not what we do today. Today the boys have gym and the girls go outside." There was some arguing back and forth, but Barbara asked the children who had something to say to raise their hands, which they did. It was finally determined that everybody would have outside play, because the gym was in use for a science fair.

The first thing in the plans had been current events, and Barbara knew from yesterday's discussion that today's presentations were supposed to be human interest items. The class had been discussing the various kinds of news, and the teacher was having them take turns reporting foreign and domestic news, local news, and so forth. The first child to speak reported about a dog that had saved the lives of two children and was presented with a medal. There was a lively discussion about

whether or not an item about a dog could be a *human* interest story, but the children carried on their discussion in an orderly fashion. The next report had to do with an automobile accident in which two people had been killed and three injured. The boy who reported this inserted a great many gory details, and there was much interest. When he finished, another child raised his hand and said, "I heard about an accident that was so bad they had to cut the car apart to get some of the people out. And they found some arms and legs just lying on the road."

This brought forth laughter from some of the children, and shivers of horror from others, but great interest from everyone. Other children told of horrible accidents they had heard about, and there were further anecdotes about dismembered bodies. Barbara couldn't think of how this kind of topic should be handled, but she did know that she didn't want it to continue. Finally she said, "All right, that's enough time on this. We have to move on. Who would like to be next?"

The next child told of a labor dispute in one of the local factories, and his report contained quite a bit of misinformation. No one had any comment on it, but Barbara decided that she should point out some of the inaccuracies. "I'm not sure if all of your facts are correct, John. For instance, the strike is not for more money for the workers, but to keep some of the men from being fired. Do any of the rest of you know anything about this?"

"My father works in the office there, and he told me about what's going on," said John. "They really want more money and besides that they want to run everything."

Barbara didn't want to be in the position of disagreeing with John's father, so she said rather lamely, "Perhaps all of us can look into this further and discuss it another time."

The next item was about running a summer school program for children who wanted to attend, and this called forth a discussion of such fervor that things began to get out of control. Barbara stood up and said, "I'm afraid that you children are not ready to go on with this. I'm very disappointed in you, and I don't know what Mrs. Gleason will think of this. Now all of

you take out your library books and read quietly—no talking!”

Barbara noticed some disgruntled looks, but everyone complied, and all went well for the next twenty minutes, until it was time for the class to go outdoors.

“All right, boys and girls,” said Barbara, “you can put your books away now, it’s time for outdoor play. Let’s line up at the door.”

Instead of the usual quietly casual line-up, there was much banging of chairs and pushing and shoving to get into line, and there were even a few fights about who should be in front of whom. The children had never done this before, and Barbara decided that she couldn’t let this pass.

“That’s just about enough! You couldn’t behave yourselves during current events, and now again I see that you don’t know how to behave. Everyone can just go back to his seat, and we will not have outside play this morning at all. You can just fold your hands and sit quietly until Mrs. Gleason returns.”

The children muttered and complained to each other as they went back to their seats, and Barbara could hear, “I wonder how long she’s going to be around,” and “Who does she think she is, anyway,” and “Mrs. Gleason never did that.”

When the children were seated, Gwen, one of the class leaders and a capable and articulate child, raised her hand and said, “Miss Davis, I don’t think this is fair. Mrs. Gleason never kept us in, and it just isn’t fair for us not to have our play time outside.”

Others joined in. “Yeah, it’s not fair,” and “It’s a gyp,” and from the back of the room came a loud, “We don’t have to listen to you anyway—you’re not our teacher!”

COMMENTS

The Problem

An inexperienced student teacher has to take sole charge of a class because of an emergency situation, and the children express resentment of her methods. We know that:

1. The first argument among the children, about whether or not they have outdoor play, is settled amicably.
2. The student teacher doesn't approve of the gory anecdotes being told during current events, but doesn't know how to handle the situation other than to say that it's time to move to another topic.
3. The student teacher wants to correct what she considers to be a child's misinformation about a labor strike, but when she finds herself disagreeing with the child's parent, she doesn't continue.
4. When the children begin to argue about the benefits of a summer school program, the student teacher expresses her disappointment with them, and tells them to read in their library books with no further talking.
5. The children line up in a noisy and disorganized fashion for outdoor play time, and the student teacher sends them back to their seats, depriving them of their time outdoors. The children are resentful and one child says that they don't really have to listen because "you're not our teacher."

Some Issues

1. How does one determine what is and is not suitable discussion material for a class?
2. If a teacher does not think discussion material is suitable, how should he communicate this to the class?
3. Should teachers openly disagree with views held by parents?
4. How can student teachers decide when children's behavior is disruptive enough to call for disciplinary action?
5. Should children be deprived of activities in one area for misbehavior in another?

6. Why do children sometimes indicate that they regard the student teacher as less important than the teacher—and what does this do to student teachers' feelings?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. If this student teacher didn't believe that the accident discussion was appropriate, how might she have indicated this to the children? Was she right not to make an issue of it, and merely say that there was no more time for the topic? How might the student teacher have tried to help the children think about and begin to understand why this topic had such appeal for them?
2. How might the student teacher have continued the discussion of the strike, after the child indicated that his father had told him all about it?
3. How else could the student have handled the children's discussion of the summer school?
4. Suggest other courses of action which the student teacher could have taken when the children lined up in a disorganized fashion.
5. When the children expressed open resentment against the student teacher, including telling her that they didn't have to listen to her, what should she do?

CASE 5

The Decline and Fall of Jane Gladstone *

JANE GLADSTONE was student teaching in Mrs. Glover's second grade classroom, and so far she had enjoyed her work a great

* This case appeared originally, in somewhat different form, in *The Co-operating Teacher At Work: Case Studies of Critical Incidents*, Elizabeth Hunter, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1962.

deal. Mrs. Glover was a kind and friendly person, and she had made Jane feel right at home. She included Jane in the class activities in rather informal ways by asking her to help one or two children during reading time, or by having her supervise six or eight children doing seat work. Mrs. Glover seemed to assume that no advance planning was necessary for the tasks she assigned to Jane, and Jane always handled these tasks in a competent manner.

The children came to Jane for help many times during the day, and often approached her to talk about their activities. Jane thought that teaching was fun, and she was glad she had decided to be a teacher of young children. They were so sweet, and she loved being with them.

Mrs. Glover had stepped out of the room several times. Twice she had arranged the children in a circle for story time, and had handed Jane an interesting book to read aloud. At other times she had left when the children were drawing, and Jane had never encountered any difficulty. She was beginning to feel quite capable as a teacher.

One morning, during Jane's second week of student teaching, Mrs. Glover called a reading group to the front of the room and asked the children who remained in their seats to get started on their various reading activities. Then she remembered that she had intended to get some books out of the library for the new social studies project. "I think I'll run up to the library now," she thought. "Jane can certainly handle this part of the day, and she really ought to get started on working with a whole reading group."

"Jane, would you mind reading with Tommy's group while I run upstairs to the library? I forgot to get the books for our new project. The group is on page thirty—just go ahead from there."

Jane came up to the reading group, and sat in the chair that had been vacated by Mrs. Glover. She'd never had a whole reading group by herself before, and she welcomed this opportunity to try her hand.

She passed the readers to the children and asked them to

turn to page thirty. Peter immediately informed her that page thirty was not the proper page number; this group was on page twenty-five. The other children said that Peter was wrong. There was quite a noisy interlude of argument. When Jane was finally able to be heard, she pointed out to Peter that he had been absent the day before, and thus had missed a story. In the meantime, a gradually rising tide of noise was coming from the children working in their seats. Jane left the reading group for a few minutes and walked around among the other children, reminding them to be more quiet so that the reading could continue.

She then returned to the reading group to find Peter and another boy engaged in a friendly wrestling match on the floor. She managed to get them seated, helped them find their places in the reader again, and suggested that the children look at the picture on the first page of the story. She had to repeat this several times in order to be heard, because again there was a good bit of noise from the seat workers.

Once more Jane left the reading group and went out into the room. She tried walking around to the noisier individuals to remind them of the importance of being quiet, but with little success. So she raised her voice and loudly told the entire class to "BE QUIET." There was a moment's pause as the children reflected on this unaccustomed approach, and this was followed by first one or two giggles, and then uproarious laughter on the part of the whole class—reading group included. A few of the boys began to jump up and down, and Peter called out "BE QUIET" in much the same manner Jane had used—which added to the general merriment and disorder.

Jane began to feel panicky. How could this have happened? "Peter, you behave yourself," she said in a loud voice.

"Peter, you behave yourself," aped Peter.

Jane became desperate. "Peter, leave the room at once!"

But Peter stayed where he was. Jane didn't feel that she could just ignore this situation, and she decided to make an example of Peter before the rest of the class. She took him forcibly by the arm and dragged him to the door—amid an at-

mosphere of, now, complete silence on the part of the rest of the class—and pushed him out into the hall. Peter landed with a thud against Mrs. Glover who was about to re-enter the room.

Jane, Peter, and Mrs. Glover stared at each other, and the second graders waited for the next move.

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher is left in charge of the classroom when her cooperating teacher steps out, and she loses control of the children. We know that:

1. The student teacher liked her teacher and the children, had been made to feel welcome by all, and had been left alone with the children a few times before, encountering no difficulties.
2. The cooperating teacher decided to run up to the library, and asked the student teacher to take over a reading group, which she had never done before.
3. The cooperating teacher did not seem to think that the student needed to plan in advance for her assignments.
4. The children in the reading group argued about what page they should start on; the children at their seats became noisy; the student went back and forth trying to quiet both groups, but did not succeed.
5. The student teacher loudly told the children to be quiet, and the class laughed and became more disorderly.
6. The student teacher decided to make an example of the boy who was causing the most difficulty, and ended up by pushing him out of the room. He landed against the cooperating teacher who was just returning from her errand.

Some Issues

1. What activities, if any, might student teachers take over without advance planning?
2. What kinds of activities can student teachers handle easily by themselves, and what kinds are apt to go more smoothly with the additional presence of the cooperating teacher?
3. Why is it often difficult for student teachers to handle situations that involve working directly with a small group, while indirectly being responsible for the activities of the rest of the class?
4. Why is it that children often become unruly when the cooperating teacher leaves the room?
5. What are the consequences to both student teacher and children when physical force is resorted to?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What might this student teacher have done to prevent further disorder at various points: for example, when she left the reading group the first time; when she returned and found two youngsters wrestling; when she went out into the room for the second time; after the children began to laugh; before she told the child to leave the room; before she dragged him out of the room?
2. What can the student teacher do when the child has landed against the cooperating teacher after having been pushed out of the room?
3. What can she do to prevent this kind of thing from happening again?

CASE 6

The Chart

MRS. RANDOLPH was having her daily conference with Rita Sands, her student teacher. "The children had a marvelous time this morning at the farm. You know, they always enjoy reading about their trips, and you haven't ever made an experience chart with the class. I think it would be a good idea for you to give it a try tomorrow. You can get the children's sentences up on the board first, and transfer them to chart paper later so we can add it to our book. The children will be full of ideas, but you'll want to think about the content a bit beforehand. Now, shall we get our reading schedule settled for tomorrow? I'll read with. . . ."

Later, as Rita was riding home on the bus, she began to think about how she might compose an experience chart with the children. The assignment fit in perfectly with the reading course she was taking, since everyone had been asked to bring in a sample of an experience chart. Now she would be able to bring in one which she had actually helped children write.

"Let's see," she thought, "what can we have for the title? 'Fun at the Farm' would be good—two 'f' words." She took out paper and pencil and began to write down her ideas. She knew that if the children were going to read the chart, it ought not to be too difficult, and it should probably have some vocabulary repetition. In a short time she had come up with this:

Fun at the Farm

Our class visited a farm. We met the farmer and he showed us around the farm. He showed us the cows and the calves. He showed us the barn and the silo. He showed us the milking machines. We had fun at the farm.

Rita read this over, was satisfied, and turned her thoughts to other matters.

The following morning, Rita talked with the children about what they had seen at the farm, and then suggested that they write a story about their trip, so that they could include it in their first grade book.

"Now," said Rita, "who can think of a good title for our story?"

The children had several suggestions. "A Trip to the Farm," "A Morning on the Farm," "The Farm," and "The Farmer and His Animals" were offered.

"Those are all good titles," said Rita, "but let's see if we can think of others. Did you have fun at the farm? Yes, you did! We all did, and I think a good title might be, 'Fun at the Farm.'" She wrote that on the board.

"Who would like to give us a good first sentence—something interesting that we saw or did."

"I saw a cute little calf with thin, thin legs," said Robin.

"I liked all the calves. I saw two little ones jumping around and playing together," said Jimmy.

"I didn't like the barn—it smelled," said David.

"But we're thinking of things we liked, David. Now, first we might say where we went. How about, 'Our class visited a farm.' That will be a good beginning. Then perhaps we can say who met us and showed us around. Who was that?"

"The farmer," came a chorus of voices.

"Good. So we can say, 'We met the farmer and he showed us around the farm.' Now—what did he show us?"

Many answers came from the children. "Fields, the barn, apple blossoms, the orchard, the cows, the baby cows, the calves."

"Yes," said Rita, "he showed us many, many things. Suppose we just mention some of them. Let's say, 'He showed us the cows and calves. He showed us the barn and silo. He showed us the milking machines.'" Rita added these sentences on the board.

"We might end this by telling whether or not we had a good time. Did we?"

"We could say, 'We had a good time at the farm,'" suggested Jimmy.

"That's the idea, Jimmy, but how about using the words we have in the title. We could say 'We had fun at the farm.'"

"Well, you children have really written an interesting story about your trip. Very good work! Who would like to read what you have written?"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher is asked to write an experience chart *with* the children, but she manipulates the children so that the end result is hers rather than theirs. We know that:

1. A student teacher is asked by her cooperating teacher to make an experience chart with the children about their trip to the farm.
2. The student teacher composes the chart, presumably just a sample, the day before she will work on it with the children.
3. While supposedly working with the children to bring together their ideas for a story about their trip, the student teacher really controls the composition of the story completely, and writes exactly what she has composed the day before.
4. The student teacher, however, tells the children that they have written the story.

Some Issues

1. Is it valuable to have children compose stories for reading, using their own words, or are teachers more capable of making good reading materials for children?
2. How should the difference between a story and the kind of experience chart which a teacher wants to contain a controlled vocabulary be explained to children?

3. How does one prepare in advance for the kind of experience described in this case, and still allow for use of the children's suggestions and ideas?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Describe how the student teacher might have honestly used the suggestions of the children, and written a good chart with a readable vocabulary.
2. Using this same case, describe how the student might have composed with the children a story of their experiences that was not necessarily designed to be read by them.

CASE 7

I Need Help

BOB ROMANO's cooperating teacher, Mr. Nolan, had gone to a professional meeting for three days toward the end of the semester, and Bob had shown himself to be such a capable student teacher that he had been given complete charge of the class during Mr. Nolan's absence. On the Monday morning following the meeting, Mr. Nolan picked Bob up and they drove to school together.

"How did things go—any problems?" asked Mr. Nolan as Bob got into the car.

"Well, not in the academic areas," answered Bob. "I planned everything very carefully beforehand, as you know, and I think I did quite well at keeping most of the class interested most of the time. I did have problems though, but I'd say they fell into the area of nonacademic teaching, if there is such a thing. You know—things like how to handle a couple of the girls who are constantly tattling to me about everyone else. Sometimes they irritate me, but then sometimes they tell me

things I ought to know, and I really never know quite how to respond to their tales.

"And then there were matters such as getting Pete to follow directions. No matter what I said to do next, he had to have everything repeated. A few times I became annoyed and gave him some lectures on his listening habits. Of course, he still never knew what to do next, so that didn't work."

"I know what you mean, Bob, about these things. They aren't subject matter problems, but they are certainly problems that every teacher has to deal with. Tell me more about the kinds of things that happened in these areas."

"Well, there's poor Betsy, who doesn't seem to have any friends. We were deciding on committees for our next science project, and it was really embarrassing because a couple of kids spoke right out and said they didn't want Betsy on their committees. I didn't know what to do, so I said they weren't being very nice, and just assigned her to one of the groups. A few of the kids made faces, but no one said anything. I wish I knew how to help Betsy, and how to help the other children accept her.

"And I did have some trouble with a couple of discussions. I know that we've talked about drawing kids out and getting wide participation, but we have those five or six kids who are so eager, and they have so many good things to contribute that it's hard to stifle them.

"Then there's Jack, who always has some funny remark to throw in. And sometimes what he says is really high-level humor. At times I crack down on him, but sometimes I just have to join in on the laughter. I hate to cut him off, and besides, I don't think I could—he's too effervescent!

"Well, Mr. Nolan, I discovered one thing in your absence. Somehow when you were around I didn't get so involved in these peripheral kinds of things. I concentrated on the subject matter, and either these other things didn't arise because of your presence, or you took care of them for me. But now I know that I need a lot of help!"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher has sole charge of the class for three days and finds that problems arise in what he refers to as non-academic areas. We know that:

1. The student teacher did not know how best to react to the girls who constantly tattled about other class members.
2. He did not think he handled properly a boy who always needed to have directions repeated.
3. He wishes that he knew how to help the child who is being rejected by her classmates.
4. Five or six children dominate the discussion, but have so many good things to say that the student teacher is reluctant to stifle them, even though he thinks they may hinder wider participation on the part of other children.
5. The student teacher isn't sure of how to deal with the boy who wisecracks in class.
6. The student teacher thinks that these kinds of problems didn't arise for him before because of the presence of the cooperating teacher, and he asks for help.

Some Issues

1. How should teachers help children who are tattlers? Why is it that teachers often confuse children by sometimes accepting their tales and sometimes rejecting them?
2. Why do some children never seem able to follow directions, even though they are intellectually capable of doing so?

3. What are some of the reasons for children's rejection of other children?
4. Should children who participate well in discussions be asked to limit their discussion so that others who are more shy, or perhaps less apt, may join in?
5. Why do teachers often deal inconsistently with the class "comedian," sometimes laughing at his remarks and at other times reprimanding him?
6. Why do children sometimes behave in a more decorous fashion when the regular teacher is present?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Suggest some ways in which this student teacher might have helped class members arrive at some logical bases for deciding when certain matters should be called to the attention of the teacher, when they should be handled by the children involved, and when they might be ignored entirely.
2. Are there some specific ways, other than reprimands, in which the student teacher might have helped the child who couldn't follow directions?
3. What could the student teacher have done to save the rejected child from the embarrassment of open rejection; what could he have done once some children said they didn't want her on their committees; and what can he do now to help her gain acceptance by the group?
4. If a student teacher does want to widen participation in discussion, what are some of the means he can employ?
5. What are some ways that the student teacher could have helped the wisecracking youngster employ his humor more positively?

CASE 8

Be Creative!

JILL FOLLET was having her weekly conference with her college supervisor of student teaching, Mr. Kent. "I decided to try some creative writing activities with my sixth grade class," she told him, "because I'm interested in writing, and because the children didn't seem to have done very much in that area. My cooperating teacher, Miss Chase, readily admitted that creative writing wasn't her forte, and she was delighted to have me try my hand. She does a fine job with the class in informational writing and the children do well at getting information down clearly and concisely, but I wanted them to do some work that required more in the way of imagination and creativity.

"Well, I had several ideas. I thought we might duplicate their stories and then make some interesting covers and have a literary magazine. Or I thought we might have a reading, and invite some other classes—a kind of poetry reading, only with prose. And I thought I might have some of the children try longer works, with several chapters about the same characters—sort of a novel."

"Those are good ideas, Jill," commented Mr. Kent. "Tell me about your results."

"The results were terrible—completely uncreative! I was so disappointed! But let me tell you exactly what I did in the lesson, and perhaps you can help me. First of all, I discussed various kinds of writing—informational reports, straight news, book reports, and the other kinds of writing the class is used to. Then I told them that we were going to try a different kind of writing, a kind that would require the use of their imaginations. Well, the children seemed interested, and we talked about the importance of interesting titles, and of how essential it is to have good opening sentences. We spoke of using lively

and interesting language and of being sure to have good endings for our stories. I told them of my ideas for putting the things together in some sort of magazine, or perhaps having a reading for other classes. And then I just let them go. I passed out the composition paper and told them to be just as creative and imaginative as they wished.

"Well, they had about twenty-five minutes; then the art teacher arrived and I collected their papers. I didn't have a chance to look at them until I got home that night, and then I felt so let down! With just a few exceptions they were pretty poor. For one thing, they were so short—I guess because the kids spent so long thinking of an idea to write about. Their use of language wasn't good at all, their ideas weren't imaginative, their opening sentences were dull, and even the titles were boring. Well . . . I thought you might have some ideas for me on what I can do next to get some decent writing from these kids. I brought the stories along to show you, and I know they're capable of better things."

"Before we talk about what you might do next, Jill," responded Mr. Kent, "what do you think you might do differently if you were starting this from the very beginning? How can you really help children to express themselves creatively?"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher is disappointed because her attempt to teach her class to write creatively is not successful. We know that:

1. The class has not done very much creative writing in the past, but their informational writing is good.
2. The student teacher decides to teach the class to write creatively.

3. She discusses various kinds of writing with the class, tells them that they will do some imaginative writing, and talks briefly with them about the importance of titles, opening sentences, interesting language and good endings. She also tells the children of some ideas she has for making use of their products.
4. The children's stories are not good, and the student teacher relates the whole experience to her college supervisor, asking for advice.

Some Issues

1. Why is it that student teachers' goals in teaching often fall short of the mark? Frequently when this happens, especially if the goals are attempts at creative work, students will tend to give up. How can they continue in their attempts at worthy nonroutine kinds of activities even when their beginning attempts fail?
2. How much must a teacher understand of such things as creative writing and the creative process before he can teach children to write in an imaginative manner? Is it possible for a person who cannot himself write with imagination to teach children to do so?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Suggest ways in which this student teacher could have approached her goal more effectively. What, for example, can be done with drawing children's attention to authors' uses of language, helping children become conscious of language and its use in description and plot, using such devices as compiling lists of vivid words for simple everyday words, finding alternatives to such old standbys as "he said," and so forth?

2. How might this student have primed the idea pump for the children? Should she have used pictures, given them first sentences, given them some title choices? What about beginning with some group writing of stories for development of standards?
3. Can the student teacher use the stories which the children have now written to improve their abilities by examining these first products, or will this result in unnecessary criticism of their efforts? Would it be better, in other words, to forget these first efforts and start all over again?

CASE 9

It's Not Easy

JERRY THOMAS and his cooperating teacher were having their daily conference, and Mr. Kahn was looking over the notes he had taken during Jerry's first full morning of teaching. There were so many things to discuss, some of them not too positive. Mr. Kahn didn't want to discourage Jerry; on the other hand, he didn't believe that anything could be accomplished unless Jerry received specific information about his teaching. "We've been together for three weeks now, and I think I know Jerry pretty well. We'll see how things go," thought Mr. Kahn.

"Jerry, what do you think? Still want to be a teacher after three solid hours of it?"

"I'm kind of exhausted, I must admit. But I guess I can stick with it. As a matter of fact, I liked the morning. I did have some trouble though, as I'm sure you noticed. For one thing, that reading group didn't go well. It seemed so dull. I just couldn't get any good discussion going. And then I finished ten minutes early, and I didn't know what to do, so I had them take turns reading the story over again out loud. I could tell they were bored, but at the moment I couldn't think of anything else to do."

"Leading a good discussion does take a lot of skill, Jerry, but I'm sure that you'll begin to get the hang of it as you go along. Anyway, I'm glad that you're able to see something of where your trouble lies. After all, the purpose of your student teaching and of our conferences is for you to become adept at self-evaluation. Perhaps some of your trouble with that reading group stemmed from the kinds of questions you were asking. They required such short answers, and frankly they didn't require much thought. I think you need to try for more thought-provoking and open-ended questions."

"I know you're right, but I find asking good questions to be very difficult. And you know, when the kids were reading orally, just going around the circle and taking turns, I knew that wasn't good practice. Afterward I thought of some other things I might have done, but at the time I just became rather nervous because I had some time to fill, and since I had said we'd each take turns reading a few sentences, I didn't think it would be a good idea to change my mind once we got started."

"Sometimes it isn't wise to change in the middle of things, but at other times it's perfectly all right. Tell me, what did you think you might have done instead?"

"Well, for one thing I could have just ended the reading group, I suppose, and gone on to the next activity. But then I was afraid that I'd end everything else too early and be left with a block of time at the end of the morning, and then I'd really be in trouble. But if I had wanted them to read orally, I should have tried for some real audience reading, having just one or two of the children read while the others closed their books and listened. Or I could have had some children take the parts of various characters in the story, while the rest listened. I know these things from my reading course, but they just weren't on tap at the time."

"As you go along in your teaching, I think you'll find that your 'on tap' ideas will come forward more readily. By the way, I liked the way you handled Kathy's questions. You weren't afraid to say that you weren't sure of the answers, and your sug-

gestion that they all try to find out what they could about the topic by tomorrow was fine. No need for teachers to think they have to be walking textbooks that just furnish facts; and leaving children with some questions is often a good idea."

"I felt kind of panicky when I didn't know the answers, but I've noticed that you often turn questions back to the children. After I had said I didn't know the answers, though, I was sorry. I could have just asked them to explore further themselves, without letting them know that I didn't really know."

"Well, I don't think that matters, but if you feel more comfortable you might try that in the future. Any other thoughts about the morning?"

"I can tell that I'm going to have some trouble with Ann's group in arithmetic," responded Jerry. "I can't seem to explain things clearly enough for the children to grasp the new ideas. And I found it difficult to adjust to the move from a group of children who gets things so easily to another group who seems to have such trouble with much simpler material. And then—that mob scene at dismissal time! It's funny, there's never any problem when *you* ask the class to prepare for lunch. But today there was so much noise and shoving—I was amazed. I can tell you, it's not easy to be a teacher!"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher finds, during his first full morning of teaching, that although he liked it he has some problems to face, and that teaching is not easy. We know that:

1. The cooperating teacher wants the student teacher to know how his teaching is going, yet doesn't want to discourage the student.
2. The student teacher had difficulty leading discussion dur-

ing the reading group, and knew that the children were bored as they took turns reading aloud.

3. He finished what he had planned for reading sooner than he had anticipated, but was afraid to move on to the next activity because he thought he might continue this trend all morning and end up with a large block of time and nothing planned to fill it.
4. In the conference he can think of other things he might have done, but while teaching, ideas did not come forward when needed.
5. The cooperating teacher tells the student that he handled a child's questions well, but the student thinks that perhaps he should have encouraged the children to find the answers themselves without telling them that he, himself, did not know.
6. The student teacher has some trouble adjusting to the change of pace in working with a fast and then a slow group in arithmetic, and doesn't find it easy to explain ideas clearly to the slower group.
7. He is surprised at the noisy behavior of the children at dismissal time.

Some Issues

1. How is it possible to give negative feedback without causing too much discouragement?
2. How can one learn to formulate provocative questions?
3. What can be done when planned activities end before the allotted time? Can one plan in ways which will prevent this situation from arising?
4. Why is it that ideas which would prove useful in solving teaching problems often do not occur to student teachers until after the time when they are needed?

5. Should teachers ever indicate to children that they do not know the answers to children's questions?
6. Why are children sometimes more rowdy with student teachers than with regular teachers?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What are some examples of provocative, open-ended questions?
2. What are some other things this student teacher might have done to fill out the reading group time? If he had moved to another activity and had extra time at the end of the morning, what are some things he could have done to use that time constructively?
3. Suggest ways in which teachers can handle children's questions without necessarily providing ready answers.
4. What can this student teacher do to prevent undue noise or shoving the next time he is responsible for dismissal?

CASE 10

Top Sergeant

FRANK GARDEN was writing his weekly log for his college supervisor. The purpose of the log was to clarify his own thinking about some of his teaching experiences, and to help his supervisor perceive more clearly his classroom situation and his teaching. He wrote:

In many ways I like teaching, but I question much of what goes on in my classroom. Frankly, I think my teacher, Miss Blake, is too soft with the kids. I believe that the purpose of going to school is to be taught good solid subject matter, and I think kids should be expected to toe the mark and produce good work.

Let me tell you about something that happened last week during a soft-ball game—just to give you an idea of our differing views. We have several boys who aren't very good in sports—they're kind of soft and they don't care. But if they put a little effort into the game, maybe they'd get someplace. Well, I wanted them to show some spirit, and so I gave a couple of them a calling-down when they dropped the ball or didn't run fast enough. Nothing serious, but Miss Blake said I shouldn't have done it. She said that would only make those boys worse. Well, I don't agree! If somebody doesn't help these kids become men now, what's going to happen to them?

Also, I selected team captains one day, and had them choose their own players. Usually they have the same teams, which Miss Blake has picked. I thought my idea would add a little more interest and competition to the proceedings, and also show the kids who were chosen last that it would be worth their while to try a little harder. Well, afterward, Miss Blake said I should have had more feeling for the kids who weren't picked until last. But these kids should know that they won't be chosen until they learn to play the game. Why pretend that they're stars? This is a competitive world and kids might as well get used to it now.

I expect the class to walk through the halls in very good order, and I expect neat work, and I expect respect for the teachers, and so forth. Maybe these are high expectations for fifth graders, but I believe in holding high standards. The children won't live up to any decent standards if their teachers are lax.

Miss Blake does a lot of group work and has the kids do so-called research projects. She thinks that children learn better on their own. Well, I think that kids come to school to learn from the teacher. I remember once reading about "exchanges of ignorance." It seems to me that that's what these kids are doing. True, Miss Blake does join in and guide the discussion, but still it seems to me that the reason we have teachers is so that they'll teach.

When I was responsible for science, we were doing a unit on the solar system. I did a lot of work, and I had a good talk prepared—full of interesting information, and the kids paid excellent attention. In our conference, after school, Miss Blake told me that she knew I had done a lot of preparation, and that my talk was interesting, but she

thought that I should have determined what the children already knew, and what they wanted to know more about. I should have had them participate more. Well, I believe that adults are more capable of deciding what knowledge children should have—and I told her so. I'm afraid that I was rather sharp when I said it. Anyway, she said that my attitude would be more suitable for a top sergeant than for a teacher! Then I said that perhaps the class could benefit from a little military discipline. And they could!

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher believes that the children in his class would benefit from a more formal academic approach, and stricter discipline and control. His cooperating teacher tells him that his attitude would be more suitable in a top sergeant. We know that:

1. The student teacher thinks that his cooperating teacher is too "soft" with the children. The student believes that children should be held to what he calls high standards, produce neat work, show respect for teachers, and so forth.
2. The student teacher reprimands some boys whom he does not think show enough spirit in a soft-ball game, and the cooperating teacher tells him that he will only make their playing worse.
3. He selects team captains and has them pick the players for their teams, so that those who are selected last will try harder. His cooperating teacher tells him that he should have had more feeling for those who would be selected last.
4. The student teacher believes that teachers should provide children with information, while the cooperating teacher believes that children should participate more actively in the learning process.

Some Issues

1. How are such things as decent standards, respect for teachers, and good solid subject matter determined?
2. How can teachers help children who are not good at sports—or is this of any importance?
3. What happens to children who are selected last on the basis of their ability for such things as soft-ball teams or spelling bees?
4. Is it true that children are prepared for a competitive world by participating competitively at school? How can children be helped to understand and accept their strengths and weaknesses realistically without being handicapped by damaging pictures of themselves?
5. How is subject matter best communicated to children? How can teachers decide if different methods are appropriate for different subject matters?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How could this student teacher have continued to work amicably with his cooperating teacher, while still disagreeing with her aims and methods?
2. Does one or both of these teachers seem too rigid in approach to be able to tolerate the views of the other?

CASE 11

Special Privileges

THE STUDENT TEACHERS from Taylor College were on campus for their weekly class meeting, and their discussion had turned to certain children who, for one reason or another, presented

some problems in the classroom. There had been some talk about how to help shy children participate more freely, what to do about children who constantly spoke out, and how to interest children who never seemed to finish their work, when Dorothy Kline began to tell about a child in her classroom. "Ralph is an aggressive child, and he doesn't know how to approach other children in any positive way. He grabs things away from them, or pushes up against them, or makes faces at them, but I'm sure he really wants friends. Naturally, because of his behavior, he doesn't have any.

"And he practically never does his homework. His written work in class is messy and usually unfinished, but he's actually quite bright. Frankly, I think the teacher criticizes him too much, although I must admit that he's a pest in class. Last week I did some sociograms on the class, and he was the only child whom no one else chose for any kind of activity. He's really the class scapegoat, I'm afraid, and things seem to be getting worse all the time.

"He likes me, I think, and I've worked with him on his reading and helped him in other areas. But now that I'm doing more with the whole class, I don't have much time to spend alone with him. I almost suggested to my teacher that she work with Ralph now that she has more time, but I didn't think she'd appreciate that thought. I feel sorry for the kid, but I don't know what to do really, and I can't blame the other children for not liking him."

"Suppose we spend some time discussing this particular child," said Dr. Tremont, the course instructor. "I think that several of you probably have children like Ralph in your classes now, and certainly many of you will encounter children like him later on in your teaching. You've all had courses in educational psychology and child development, and now you've had some experience in the classroom. Let's see if we can't come up with some suggestions for helping Dorothy with Ralph."

"Is there any chance for outside help—from a guidance person or a psychiatrist or psychologist?" asked one class member.

"Not really. He was given an intelligence test and his I.Q. was 120. The town has no guidance services, and only children who are extremely disturbed are ever referred to the clinic in the next city. Ralph's parents can't afford any special help for him, and from what my teacher says, they wouldn't be interested anyway," replied Dorothy.

"So any help that Ralph receives is going to have to come from his teachers," said another student, "and I believe that teachers can do a great deal for this kind of child. One thing that occurs to me is to try to build up Ralph's self-esteem. Do you ever give Ralph any chance to do errands for you, or have special jobs about the room? From what I've read and seen, little things such as that can build up Ralph in the eyes of the other children, especially in the lower grades. And that would help him know that you like him and trust him."

"Yes, and remember when we talked about assigning children to work groups?" came another suggestion. "There must be something that Ralph is interested in, and if he could work with one or two other children who would accept him and help him, then others might accept him and he could receive attention in more positive ways."

"I've discovered that if children don't finish their work, assigning them less to do is a good idea," said another class member. "At least then they get through their assignments and you can honestly praise them, and gradually add more to what they're doing, until eventually they may be able to handle the work that most of the kids can do. I always remember that when I went to school, kids had to stay after school for not finishing their work, or for misbehaving, and since the same ones stayed after school for the whole eight years of elementary school, it obviously did no good. Never seemed to dawn on the teachers to try a new approach, though."

"I might suggest, Dorothy," added Dr. Tremont, "that you bring Ralph into the class discussions by giving him questions that you know he can answer well, and then praising him for his good work. Perhaps he needs a bit more praise than most children. I think that these suggestions have all been worth-

while, and perhaps when we meet next time, Dorothy can tell us what she has tried with Ralph."

"I'd like to do that," said Dorothy.

"Of course, we won't expect miracles in a week, but perhaps you will have some progress to report. Now, in the short time that we have left today, I'd like to go over your assignment for next week. . . ."

At the next meeting of the course, Dr. Tremont began by saying, "You will remember that during our last meeting we talked about the youngster in Dorothy's class who presented such problems, and Dorothy agreed to tell us what she has tried with him since then, and how things have gone. Do you have anything to report, Dorothy?"

"I have something to report, but I'm afraid it's not very encouraging. After our class meeting last week, I tried several of the things we talked about. I sent Ralph on an errand to the principal's office, and he was terribly pleased and carried out the task very well. I made sure that I praised him as an excellent and reliable helper, and I could see that he just basked in that attention. I managed to include him very positively in group discussions several times, and I began planning some sort of science demonstration he might prepare for the class. Oh, he still fooled around most of the time, and interrupted, and so forth, but he did pay attention a bit more, and I think he was less of a bully with the other children.

"I even told him that he only had to do the first two sections on one of the seat-work assignments, and that then I'd discuss it with him. Well, he did both sections quickly and, for him, neatly."

"That sounds *very* encouraging, Dorothy," commented Dr. Tremont.

"I *was* encouraged at first, but on the third day of this program for Ralph, when I had my conference with my cooperating teacher, she said that she thought I had been singling Ralph out for special privileges that he didn't deserve. She told me that Ralph's behavior called for disapproval, not commendation. And she said that if other children saw Ralph

being rewarded for doing less work, they would see no reason for doing any better. Well, I didn't want to say that we had discussed Ralph and ways that I might help him, and I didn't want to seem to be criticizing her—although I told you before that I think she picks on him too much. Anyway, she said 'No more special privileges' and that was that!"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A class of student teachers discusses how one class member might help a child in her class who is rejected by the other children, but when the student teacher tries to implement the suggestions of her classmates, her cooperating teacher disapproves. We know that:

1. A student teacher tells her fellow classmates of a child in her classroom who is rejected by the other children because of his aggressive behavior, and also says that the regular teacher criticizes him too much. She adds that he is generally disruptive in the classroom, and that his work is not good, although he has the potential for doing well academically.
2. The instructor asks that the class discuss this child and suggest ways in which he might be helped.
3. The group suggests: building up the child's self-esteem, utilizing work groups, cutting down on his assignments so that he will finish, and bringing him into class discussion in positive ways.
4. The student teacher tries these things and seems to be meeting with some success, but her cooperating teacher tells her that she is to stop giving the child special privileges, since his behavior warrants disapproval, not commendation.

Some Issues

1. What can student teachers do to help children whom the regular teacher seems to reject, without appearing to criticize the behavior of the teacher?
2. How much can teachers do without expert help to aid children like the one in this case?
3. Should certain children be given special privileges, or should all children be treated equally in the classroom?
4. Should children ever be allowed to do less than their classmates and then be praised for their accomplishments? Will other children then be tempted to do less also?
5. How can teachers keep themselves from constantly using methods which do not seem to bring results, such as keeping the same children after school, or always reprimanding children for the same infractions?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. In what other ways might this child have been helped if the cooperating teacher had not put a stop to the student teacher's plans?
2. Is there anything that the student teacher can do now to help this particular child in the face of the cooperating teacher's dictate that he receive no more special privileges?

III

*The Student Teacher
Works
with the School Staff*

ALTHOUGH MOST of the student teacher's time is spent with the cooperating teacher, there will be other people in the school with whom the student teacher will have contact—the principal and other teachers, for example. These latter relationships are important both because they have an effect on the student teaching experience, and because they provide the student with an opportunity to work with colleagues with whom they will work as regular teachers. Several cases in this chapter involve students with members of the school staff other than their cooperating teacher.

However, the majority of cases in the chapter involve relationships between student teachers and cooperating teachers. Whenever two people work together as closely as these two do, problems, often involving human relations, can arise. It has been wisely said that the most important thing in the cooperating teacher-student teacher relationship is respect for one another's views, rather than agreement with each other's philosophies.

CASE 12

I Have a Few Ideas

JIM RHODES was extremely eager to try his hand at teaching, and during the first semester of his senior year he would have his chance. He had been assigned to an eighth grade classroom

as a student teacher with Mr. Wilson, who taught English and social studies. Jim's program called for him to spend mornings in Mr. Wilson's classroom, and afternoons at the college for course work.

Jim enjoyed learning, and he was an excellent student. He was the kind of probing, questioning young man whom most professors liked having in class. He contributed frequently to class discussions, and his comments and questions were relevant and thought-provoking.

On the day that Jim began his student teaching, Mr. Wilson greeted him at the classroom door, and they talked together before the youngsters arrived. "I think you'll find both of the eighth grade classes good to work with, Jim," said Mr. Wilson. "They're interested and eager, and they've been looking forward to your arrival. Seems that they had a student teacher last year in the seventh grade whom they liked a great deal. I've never worked with a student before, as you may know, but I'm looking forward to these twelve weeks as much as the youngsters. I hope that we can really work as partners rather than as head teacher and assistant teacher. I'd like you to share any ideas and suggestions you have, and I'll do the same with you. I've heard good things about you from the college, and I know that you're a capable person. Now, for this first morning, you'll just want to observe and get the feel of things. Here are the seating charts, and I thought you could make your headquarters right over here at this extra desk. You can walk about whenever that seems appropriate—when we're writing, for instance—and I hope that you'll begin to join in our discussions whenever you have something to say. Jot down anything you want to ask about, or any ideas you have, and we can discuss things at lunch. Just make yourself right at home."

And so began Jim's student teaching—quite auspiciously, he thought. He liked Mr. Wilson right away, and he liked being treated as a coworker. Jim observed intently that first morning, and by noon he knew almost all of the children's names, and had taken many notes on the various classroom activities.

At the end of the morning, Jim and Mr. Wilson went to the school cafeteria, and after they had taken their lunch trays to a table, they talked about the college. Mr. Wilson was working on his doctorate, and they discussed some of the faculty members with whom they both had courses. Finally, Mr. Wilson turned the discussion to the morning's activities.

"Well, what did you think, Jim? Any comments or thoughts about this morning, or are you still just getting used to us?"

Jim had a ready reply. "I do have a few ideas which I noted down," he said as he opened his notebook. "For instance, during the current events periods I really didn't think the kids were discussing the news on quite the level that they might have. So I thought it might be a good idea to do something with newspaper study—you know, what the job of a good newspaper is. It would be perfect too, for combining social studies with the concise expression of ideas in their composition work. There are lots of ways we could approach it—have them look at samples of different newspapers and categorize the types of news, note how the same news is expressed differently in different newspapers, and so forth. Then too, and I really like this idea, how about subscribing to *The New York Times* at student rates, and having both classes spend the first half hour or so of the period reading the paper? That could be invaluable. I'm very interested in all the possibilities in that area.

"Then," continued Jim, "I was kind of surprised, if you don't mind my saying so, at your teaching the parts of speech in the old-fashioned way. We've been doing a lot with structural linguistics at the college, and I think it's great. We know that nouns aren't names of persons, places and things, and that verbs aren't action words. Youngsters should be helped to understand the structure of their language, and if we tried doing something with them like discovering the properties of a noun, I bet they could come up with the fact that a noun is a word that can be made plural, can take an article, and can be made possessive. That would mean more to them, and be more helpful, than the old warmed-over Latin grammar.

"Another idea I thought of has to do with book reports. I was looking over that folder of book reports you gave me, and I have some suggestions for variations on *that* old theme! I thought—but look at the clock! It's almost time for my afternoon class, and I know you have to get back too. I thought this morning was terrific, and I can hardly wait until tomorrow."

"Well, I can hardly wait myself!" said Mr. Wilson as they rose from the table and prepared to leave the cafeteria.

COMMENTS

The Problem

At the end of his first morning of observation a student teacher is asked by his cooperating teacher if he has any thoughts on the morning's work, and the student proceeds to tell his teacher what he might do to improve his curriculum. We know that:

1. The student teacher has an excellent college record and is a questioning, probing person.
2. The cooperating teacher looks forward to working with his first student teacher, welcomes him eagerly, tells him that he hopes they can work as a team, and urges the student teacher to share any suggestions or ideas with him.
3. In the first conference the student responds to the cooperating teacher's request for comments by telling him that he could improve the current events period, update his teaching of grammar, and vary the kinds of book reports he receives from the children. He adds that he can hardly wait until tomorrow, and that he thought the morning was terrific.
4. The cooperating teacher, presumably somewhat nonplussed, says that he too can hardly wait for the next day.

Some Issues

1. Are questions which are appropriate in college classrooms sometimes inappropriate in student teaching situations, and if so, why?
2. What kinds of curriculum suggestions might student teachers make to their cooperating teachers?
3. How can student teachers make suggestions for curriculum changes without appearing brash and without offending their cooperating teachers?
4. Is it really possible for a cooperating teacher and a student teacher to work as equal partners on a team?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Suggest other responses this student teacher might have made to the question, "Any comments or thoughts about this morning?"
2. How else might the student have discussed his ideas for changing the current events period, the teaching of grammar, and the writing of book reports?

CASE 13

How Do You Know?

THE COURSE for cooperating teachers, offered by State College, was meeting for the second time, and Dr. Benton, the course instructor, had scheduled a discussion of ways of helping student teachers with their planning. All of the course members had student teachers in their classrooms; many for the first time. The discussion began to move away from planning as the teachers began to tell of their experiences with particular stu-

dents. Dr. Benton did not try to bring the conversation back to her planned focus immediately, because of the obvious need of the teachers to give voice to their concerns.

"I really don't know what to do with the girl I have," said Mrs. Torgeson. "She's so quiet and shy that frankly I don't know if she'll ever be able to get up in front of the class. Even when I suggest that she work with a small group, she hesitates, and I'm afraid to push her past her capacity. So far, all she's done is observe and listen to a few children read. She doesn't even respond easily when children come up individually to talk with her, so they're beginning to give up. I've had student teachers before, but all the others have been so eager to get started."

"Well, I have one of those eager ones—too eager, as far as I'm concerned," said Mr. Bromley. "Now I don't mind when the student teacher joins in our class discussions—in fact, I suggested it. But this fellow talks so much that the kids hardly have a chance. Last week in this class we talked about there being no set rules for student teachers' activities—how long to observe, when the first teaching should take place, and so on. Now I'm quite willing to let a strong student accomplish as much as he can, but this fellow just wants to take over completely. At this point, I'd welcome the kind of shy, retiring student you have, Mrs. Torgeson!"

"I'm pretty lucky, I guess," Miss Clinton joined in. "My student is working out beautifully. She seems to know exactly when to step in, when to help out and when to stay in the background. I'm delighted with her, and she's already doing quite a bit of teaching, both with groups and with the whole class. I'm looking forward to a wonderful semester."

"I have to tell you about the mistake I made with my student," Mrs. Ashley spoke next. "The first class activity I asked her to take charge of was our outdoor play time. I always think of that as being such an easy time, because the kids love it. We decided that it would be a good idea to teach a new game. Well, it was awful! The children went wild and started running all over the place. I realized my error, but by then it was too

late. Now the poor student is afraid of the children, and I'm afraid that the children now see her as someone they can test to the limit."

"I can sympathize with you—I made the same mistake last year," commented Mr. Sturgis. "Some of the activities that we think of as being so easy and routine turn out to be quite hard, because of things we don't even think about any more. But how do you know what will happen in advance? I find that the children test student teachers much more than they test us, anyway. We are the teachers, and the children know that."

"I'm having rather a serious problem with my student," said Mrs. Glass. "She simply can't accept any suggestion of any kind. She takes everything I say as severe criticism, and she either counters any suggestion I have with a better one, or she replies with a 'yes, but.' I'm beginning to think of her as 'Miss Yes, But.' It's annoying, and I'm afraid that I'm losing my patience with her. How can you help anyone like her—who already knows everything?"

"I had a student like that last year, and I know what you mean. This year my student is wonderful," said Miss Drew, "however, when I think of some of the problems I've had in the past, that I haven't known how to handle! For instance, I like to feel that my student and I can join in on each other's conversations and so forth, but I never know when to correct errors, and when not to. A couple of times I've made a careless spelling mistake on the board, and the student was afraid to tell me, when I would have appreciated being told. On the other hand, I hesitate to point out student errors in front of the children. There are so many unforeseen problems that arise in working with student teachers. And really, Dr. Benton, how *do* you know how to handle them?"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A group of cooperating teachers who are taking a college course in the supervision of student teachers discuss some of

the experiences they are having with their students. We know that:

1. One teacher has a student teacher who is so shy that the teacher doesn't think she'll ever be able to teach.
2. Another teacher's student is so eager that he is being overly aggressive about wanting to take over the class.
3. A third teacher has a student who seems to know exactly when to step in and when to stay in the background, and this student is doing well with her teaching.
4. One teacher discusses the first activity that she had her student take complete charge of, and says that she decided upon outdoor play time, since she expected that to be so easy, but she realized too late that this could be a difficult activity for a neophyte.
5. One student teacher rejects suggestions for improvement that the cooperating teacher offers, and the cooperating teacher says that it's annoying if not impossible to try to help anyone who already knows all the answers.
6. A cooperating teacher wonders how to decide whether or not the student or the teacher should ever call attention to such things as spelling errors in front of the children, and also wonders how one can know how to handle all of the unforeseen problems that arise in working with student teachers.

Some Issues

1. Are certain people too shy or too aggressive or too rigid to ever become capable teachers? Are there other characteristics that make some people unsuitable for teaching, and how can these be determined before student teaching? If not discovered until the student teaching experience, what should be done?

2. Which activities in the curriculum are suitable for beginning responsibilities for student teachers and which are not? Will these differ for different students? Who should decide where the beginnings should be made, and on what criteria should these decisions be based?
3. Should teachers or students ever correct each other before the children?
4. On what bases can unforeseen problems be dealt with in teaching—whether these involve children, student teachers, cooperating teachers, or anything in the teaching situation?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What might be done to increase the confidence of the shy student teacher? To decrease the participation of the aggressive student teacher? To help the student teacher who rejects suggestions?
2. How might student teachers and cooperating teachers come to some advance understandings with each other about when the cooperating teacher should step in (as for example when the children ran wild on the playground) without undermining the authority of the student teacher?

CASE 14

Loyalties *

BETH RYAN was student teaching in a kindergarten classroom and she loved every minute of it. Eleanor Moore, her cooperat-

* This case appeared originally in *The Cooperating Teacher At Work: Case Studies of Critical Incidents*, Elizabeth Hunter, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1962.

ing teacher, treated her as a coworker rather than as a student teacher, and they got along splendidly. They had become quite good friends, and Eleanor had invited Beth to her home for dinner several times.

Eleanor talked to Beth about the other teachers in the school and about the school principal, Martin Winston, just as though Beth were one of the faculty. The principal didn't always agree with Eleanor about how kindergarten children should be handled, but Eleanor never let these disagreements upset her. In fact, she usually ignored whatever Mr. Winston suggested, and Mr. Winston never seemed to check on whether or not his ideas were being put into practice . . . perhaps because this was his first year in the school, and his first year as a principal.

"Mr. Winston has a lot to learn about young children," said Eleanor to Beth, "but in the meantime I'm not going to let him bother me or spoil the year for these kids. Why, do you know what he said yesterday? He said that he thought the children should decide on what they were going to build before they went over to the block corner and that I should follow through to see that they accomplished what they had set out to do! This was during our activity period, and I didn't have time to give him a short course in early childhood education. Can you imagine? Anyway, he hardly ever comes into the room, so I'm sure we won't have any real trouble."

Beth always listened sympathetically when Eleanor talked to her about the principal or other teachers. This kind of inclusion made her feel like a full-fledged member of the faculty. Beth admired Eleanor tremendously. She was an excellent teacher, and the children not only loved school and their teacher but were obviously learning a great deal.

One day Beth was taking part of the class through the halls in the usual manner—that is, in a casual fashion with some of the children jogging on ahead, others walking with Beth, and still others lagging in the rear. Mr. Winston walked toward her, observing the group as he came.

"Miss Ryan," he said, "it would seem to me that you ought to have the children in some sort of line. The proper way to

walk through the halls of a school is in orderly fashion, keeping to one side."

Mr. Winston's voice was not harsh, but there was no doubt that what his words meant were "get those children in a line and keep them in it!"

Beth quickly told the children to form a line with a partner, which they did, and when they returned to the classroom Eleanor was informed of what had happened, by a rather upset Beth.

Eleanor's reply of "oh, don't let him bother you: he just doesn't know anything about working with young children," didn't do much to comfort Beth.

A few days later, Beth was in the gym with half of the children, and Mr. Winston dropped in for a visit. "Miss Ryan! Why are you letting those children climb up the slide? That's extremely dangerous and they must stop at once. They should slide down—not walk up!"

Now Eleanor had frequently told Beth that children should be allowed to use play equipment in a free and imaginative manner; that a slide wasn't only for sliding down, even if that's all that most adults allowed. Beth quickly walked to the slide and told the children that Mr. Winston wanted them to go up only by way of the steps and to slide down. The children complied, and Mr. Winston left.

When she returned to the classroom, Beth told Eleanor of what Mr. Winston had said about the use of the slide, feeling rather unhappy about her reprimand. Again, Eleanor passed over the episode lightly, saying that Mr. Winston simply didn't understand such things.

Eleanor continued to take the children through the halls in the usual manner, and she continued to allow the children to use the slide as they wished; but Beth could never quite decide what to do when she was alone. She managed to keep on the safe side by doing as Mr. Winston had directed if she thought there was a chance that she might meet him.

The school had a rule against allowing the younger children

to go through the halls by themselves, since it was difficult to keep track of outsiders entering the halls. Beth thought this a sensible rule, although Eleanor sometimes ignored it by sending small groups of children on to the gym ahead of the others. The children loved to be allowed to go unchaperoned, and Eleanor said that she thought the sense of independence which the children derived from this was very important—and no one would bother them in a group, anyway.

One afternoon after Eleanor had allowed a group to walk to the gym by themselves Mr. Winston stopped Beth in the hall. "Miss Ryan," he asked, "didn't a group of your children walk through the halls by themselves today?" Beth looked at the floor for a moment before answering. She didn't want to deliberately misinform Mr. Winston, who was after all in charge of the school; neither did she want to get Eleanor into trouble. She finally replied with a weak, "I don't think so."

"Does Miss Moore ever allow children in the halls by themselves?" asked Mr. Winston.

"Not that I know of," came Beth's worried response.

That night as Beth was preparing for the next day's teaching she kept thinking about what she had said to Mr. Winston. She felt caught in a very unpleasant situation.

"I suppose there isn't any use in telling Eleanor my worries about Mr. Winston," she thought. "She doesn't care what he thinks—but she's the teacher! I'm just a student teacher, and I *do* care what he thinks. Well . . . I like Eleanor—she's been wonderful to me, and the children are delightful; but I'm glad that next week will be my last week in that school!"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher feels caught between her cooperating teacher whom she likes and admires, and the principal, with whom the cooperating teacher does not agree. We know that:

1. The cooperating teacher treats the student teacher as a coworker rather than a student teacher, and they have become good friends.
2. The principal makes suggestions to the cooperating teacher about her program, which the teacher usually ignores. The teacher thinks that the principal doesn't really know much about young children, and shares her thoughts with the student teacher.
3. The principal reprimands the student teacher several times for doing things that the teacher does, but when the student tells her teacher of this, she is merely told not to let the principal bother her. The student decides to try to keep on the safe side by following the principal's dictates if she thinks he will see her.
4. The principal asks the student whether or not the teacher has disregarded a school rule about letting children walk through the halls by themselves, and the student replies that she doesn't think so, although she knows that the teacher has done just that.
5. The student teacher is glad that her student teaching is coming to an end, although the experience has been a good one, because she feels caught in an unpleasant situation.

Some Issues

1. Is there some more or less appropriate kind of relationship between student teacher and cooperating teacher, or is wide variety acceptable? If the two become close friends, will this interfere with their professional responsibilities to one another?
2. Should a student teacher attempt to disassociate himself from any staff rivalries or differences that involve the cooperating teacher? Can this be done in diplomatic fashion?

3. If a cooperating teacher is particularly helpful to the student teacher and they have a close relationship, does the student owe a certain special loyalty to that teacher?
4. If a teacher believes that an administrator's suggestions are not professionally sound, what can the teacher do?
5. What about the principal's suggestions: should kindergarten children decide on what they are going to build before they go to the block corner, and should teachers see that their goals are accomplished? should children be expected to walk through the halls in lines? should children be allowed to walk up a slide?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What could this student teacher have said to her cooperating teacher that might have made the teacher more understanding of the student's dilemma?
2. Was the student right to decide to follow the rules of the principal if he might see her, but otherwise do as her teacher did? How else might she have handled this?
3. What other responses could the student have made to the principal's questions about a group of children walking through the halls by themselves, and whether or not the teacher ever let children walk in the halls alone?

CASE 15

Jealousy? *

As KATHY JAMISON walked across the campus toward her college supervisor's office, she was thinking over what she wanted

* This case appeared originally in *The Cooperating Teacher At Work: Case Studies of Critical Incidents*, Elizabeth Hunter, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1962.

to talk about during her conference time. It seemed odd, but she was sure her cooperating teacher was jealous of her. Not that there was anything overt. They had never had any kind of a quarrel. It was just that every day instead of doing more and more in the classroom, Kathy was doing less and less, and she honestly didn't believe her growing idleness had anything to do with her teaching performance.

"How am I going to explain to Miss Crane that I think Miss Plant is jealous of me? I've just got to—because I'm getting awfully tired of sitting in the back of the classroom," she thought.

Miss Crane came to the door of her office. "Come in, Kathy. I've been looking over the plans you gave me for that series of classroom and outdoor games. You certainly have compiled an excellent list. In fact, I've been thinking that we ought to mimeograph them and give them out to the rest of the students. Tell me, how have the games been going over with those third graders of yours?"

"Well, Miss Crane," replied Kathy, "I taught them one indoor game, and one new outdoor game last week, but since then I haven't had an opportunity to do any more with games. I thought the games went over very well. The children were responsive, and they were very cooperative. I was a little afraid they might get sort of wild, but they didn't. They loved it."

"Tell me what else you have been doing," said Miss Crane. "When I was there last, you did a fine job with the morning planning. And in our conference with Miss Plant you spoke of introducing a new arithmetic concept to the children. How has that progressed?"

"It hasn't progressed at all. In fact, nothing has progressed. And that's what I'd like to speak to you about, Miss Crane. I've been thinking about this all week. I don't know exactly how to say it, because it sounds rather peculiar, and I'm afraid it sounds conceited on my part, but I think that Miss Plant is jealous of me. I really think she is. And it's certainly not because I'm a better teacher than she is. She's excellent, and I know it. I watch her with amazement, sometimes, because she's

so skillful. But I think that she's jealous of me because of the children."

"Tell me what makes you think this, Kathy? Can you give me some examples, perhaps?" asked Miss Crane.

"Well, just take the games. The first two weeks I was there I realized what an asset a good supply of games was to a teacher. Miss Plant always seemed to know when to liven up the day with a good game, and I mentioned to her that I was very impressed with this, and that I'd like to build up a good supply of games. She was very nice about it, and said she'd be glad to help me. Well, I got a supply of books, and she loaned me some materials that she had, and I got to work. She said she thought it would be nice if I were in charge of games for most of my stay, and I was pleased. Last Tuesday I played a short game with the children in the room, and in the afternoon I took charge of the outdoor play period, and taught them another new game, which went over very well. Now I can't say for sure that this had anything to do with what has happened, but as we were walking into the room, one of the boys said to Miss Plant, 'Boy, Miss Jamison sure knows a lot of games. I like her.'

"That afternoon when we talked over the next day's plans, I asked about teaching more games, and Miss Plant said that she wasn't even sure that there would be any time for games, because the day would be a busy one, and that I shouldn't bother to plan anything. She said that if there were time to fit anything in, she'd take charge. Well, of course, there was time for a game as there always is, but she took charge."

"Do you have any other reasons for feeling that Miss Plant is jealous of you?" asked Miss Crane.

"Well, there's the time in the morning before we really get started. The children are allowed to walk around and chat with one another, and more and more of them have started to come over to me, since they have begun to know me better. In the beginning if someone had some exciting news, or a new pair of shoes, or something, he always rushed up to Miss Plant to tell her. Now the kids come up to me as often as they go to her, and, of course, I've just been thrilled to think they like me. But

I think Miss Plant's feelings may be hurt when the children come over to me instead of going to her. Lately she's been giving me things to do during that time, like putting work on the board. If any children do come over to me, she tells them that I'm busy and not to bother me.

"When we get into line," Kathy continued, "everyone wants to be my partner, and sometimes they do push to get to me, but naturally I'm flattered. Well, the other day Miss Plant said in quite a stern voice that from now on no one could be my partner. She told me they made too much of a commotion over the whole thing.

"She even told me that it isn't wise to hug children all the time, and all I ever do is sometimes put an arm around a child when I talk to him.

"You know that at first I liked being in that classroom. And I still like parts of it, but I just don't get much chance to do anything any more. I like the kids, and Miss Plant is a good teacher. I'm sure that I'm learning a lot from watching her, but I want to do things. And I'm spending more and more time just watching."

"I'm glad that you spoke of this to me," said Miss Crane. "Miss Plant has never had a student teacher before, and perhaps she thinks you have been moving in too quickly. I would hesitate to blame your inaction on jealousy, but I agree with you that just watching at this point is not the best learning experience for you. Do you think that the three of us might have a talk about all of this?"

"Oh no—I mean—I wouldn't know what to say. I think it would be very embarrassing. And I hope you're not going to tell her I said I think she's jealous of me. I don't know what to do, but I don't want to talk about it with her. Couldn't we think of something else?" asked Kathy.

"Well, Kathy, suppose that I speak with Miss Plant when I come to observe you next week. Of course I won't mention our conversation, but I think I can find a way to help the situation."

The next week when Miss Crane entered Miss Plant's room,

she wondered just what the results of their conference would be. And she also wondered what Kathy would be doing with the children—if anything.

In the room, Miss Plant was working with about ten children on some arithmetic problems in the front of the room, while the other children worked at their seats. Kathy was reading with a child at the back of the room. Miss Crane smiled at Miss Plant as she came in, and walked over to sit next to Kathy. When Kathy's pupil finished his reading, Kathy introduced him to Miss Crane.

"This is James, and he and I read together every day. His reading is getting better every single day, and we're both very pleased about that."

"I listened to him read," said Miss Crane, "and I can see that he's doing well."

Both adults knew that they were giving encouragement to a child who was rather a slow reader. As James returned to his seat, Kathy whispered to Miss Crane, "He's the only child I ever read with any more."

Miss Plant finished with her group, and told the children to get ready for their weekly visit from the music teacher. Miss Crane walked over to Miss Plant and asked if perhaps she could leave the children for five or ten minutes, in order to allow the two of them some time for a chat. Miss Plant readily agreed, and when the music teacher arrived and had started with the children, Miss Plant and Miss Crane walked out of the room and into the teachers' room.

After some preliminary chatting about other matters, Miss Crane asked, "How is Miss Jamison doing?"

"Well, she seems to be a nice enough girl, but I'm afraid she's rather immature in some respects. At times I think she must regard herself as a big sister to the children rather than as their teacher. She seems to be forever hugging the children," replied Miss Plant. "There was so much commotion among the children about being her partner that I simply had to announce that no one could be her partner. Instead of Miss Jamison

handling the partner situation by herself, it seemed to me that she enjoyed having everyone fight over her and try to cling to her.

"Then, too, there are times when I expect everyone to be quiet, and I find that frequently during these times Miss Jamison talks to some of the children near her. Frankly, I find that I have to be the disciplinarian in the room, while she is the good fairy.

"I have spoken to her about having the children hang all over her, and about the necessity of being firm with them upon occasion, but when she does speak to the children about any of these things she just tells them that 'Miss Plant doesn't like you to do that!' I don't know how she expects to be a teacher if she can't be firm with children," continued Miss Plant. "I've told her this, but it doesn't seem to do any good. Of course, the children like her very much—and no wonder.

"I don't mind telling you, Miss Crane, that things were much more peaceful when I had the children to myself."

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher and a cooperating teacher describe different versions of the same events to the college supervisor. We know that:

1. The student teacher tells the college supervisor that her cooperating teacher is giving her less and less responsibility in the classroom. The student suspects that the teacher is jealous of the fact that the children like her, were beginning to spend time with her and turn to her for things that they used to rely upon the teacher for.
2. The college supervisor says that perhaps the teacher is merely hesitating because she is afraid that the student

was moving in too rapidly, and that they might have a talk about the matter.

3. The student thinks this would be embarrassing, and the supervisor says that she will attempt to clear things up on her next visit.
4. When the supervisor visits the classroom, the cooperating teacher tells her that the student teacher regards herself more as a big sister to the children than a teacher; that she is not firm enough with the children, expecting the teacher to be the disciplinarian; and that things were much more peaceful in her classroom before the arrival of the student teacher.

Some Issues

1. How is it possible for two people to perceive a situation differently given the same objective data? What are some methods by which people can attempt to assess data objectively?
2. Why might cooperating teachers be jealous of the attention or affection that the children show to student teachers? What can students do to prevent such jealousy from arising?
3. What can student teachers do to avoid situations that appear to put the student teacher in the light of the "good fairy," while the cooperating teacher is the disciplinarian?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How might this student teacher have tried to improve the situation by speaking directly with the teacher? Suggest what she might have said.
2. What can be done now by the three people involved to improve matters?

CASE 16

Diplomacy

SALLY SCOTT was student teaching in the ungraded primary of a small private school. Her cooperating teacher, Mrs. Fuller, was a pleasant person to work with, and her program for children seemed to include all of those activities which Sally's college teachers thought desirable.

One day Mrs. Fuller was absent from school, and since Sally had been with the class for eight weeks, she was given full charge of the children. Mr. Landers, the principal, told Sally that he would come in during the latter part of the morning to help out, and Sally welcomed this idea. Mr. Landers had stopped in many times during the weeks that Sally had been in the school, to observe or to chat with some of the children, and they liked him.

Everything went along smoothly, and no problems arose during the morning. When Mr. Landers arrived he suggested that he play the piano while the children played the skipping game—one of their favorites. Mrs. Fuller frequently played this game with the children, but she did not make it a game of elimination. When the music stopped she would merely say, "Oh, we caught Nancy that time," or "Bill and Joan weren't quite fast enough," and then would start the music again with everyone participating. Mr. Landers, however, did eliminate those children who did not stop skipping when the music stopped, and these children stood on the sidelines and watched.

As the game went on some of the watchers became restless, and Karen, particularly, began to push some of the other children. Mr. Landers stopped the game and reprimanded Karen, who quieted down for awhile. But as the game continued, the watching children became noisy, and once more Karen was the loudest offender. Mr. Landers halted the game again, and said, "Karen, if you don't stop that right now I'm going to call up

your mother and tell her to come to school and take you home!" For the rest of the game, Karen watched quietly from the sidelines.

When the game was over, Mr. Landers left and Sally took charge for the rest of the morning. The children responded to her capable guidance as positively as they did to their regular teacher.

When the children had gone home to lunch, Mr. Landers came in and said, "What did you think about the morning? I thought things went very nicely."

Sally, who had been furious about his method of playing the skipping game and of handling Karen, burst out, "I can't say that I agree! I'm amazed that you would play an elimination game with the children. The children who need the most practice get the least—and no wonder they became noisy, just waiting around with nothing to do. Besides, anybody who would discipline a child by threatening to call her mother doesn't have much feeling for children."

Mr. Landers looked at Sally with amazement during this outburst, but he merely said, "Perhaps you're right. Well, I have to get back to the office now, but if you need me this afternoon, I'll be available."

As Sally went about the room preparing for the afternoon session, she couldn't help feeling pleased with herself. Her part of the morning had gone so well. Both Mrs. Fuller and her college supervisor had told her that she was doing a fine job in her student teaching, and this morning had been further proof to her that she was doing well in her chosen profession.

When Mrs. Fuller returned to school the next day she told Sally that Mr. Landers had spoken of the capable manner in which Sally had handled everything on the previous day, and when Sally met the principal in the hall he greeted her in his usual friendly manner. But two days later, Sally's college supervisor called her in and spoke to her about her criticism of Mr. Landers.

"You know, Sally, student teachers have to be careful about expressing themselves so openly to staff members of their

schools. After all, you're an invited guest in that school—and besides that you are a representative of the college. You're doing a fine job in your student teaching, and I believe that you are going to make an excellent teacher. But you can't always say what you're thinking without getting yourself into trouble."

Sally agreed to be more careful in the future, but as she left her supervisor's office she thought to herself, "Mr. Landers asked me what I thought of the morning—and I told him. If he didn't want to know, why did he ask? And besides, at least I told him what I thought to his face. That was more honest than complaining to Mrs. Fuller or somebody else behind his back—which is what he did to me! If more people took firm and honest stands with each other about their teaching methods, then the schools would be in far better condition. People are either competent to teach or they aren't, and if the 'competents' were a little less tolerant of the 'incompetents,' then children would be a lot better off!"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher tells the school principal that she doesn't think much of his methods of discipline or teaching, and is reprimanded by her college supervisor for her lack of tact. We know that:

1. The student teacher is capable and is doing a good job in her student teaching.
2. The student teacher is given responsibility for the class when her cooperating teacher is absent, and the school principal comes in at the end of the morning to help out.
3. The principal plays a game of elimination with the children, and some of the eliminated children become restless and noisy. One of the children is told by the principal that if she doesn't stop her noise, he will call her mother and tell her to come and take the child home.

4. During the lunch hour the student teacher tells the principal that she is amazed that he would play a game of elimination with the children, and that his methods of discipline do not show much feeling for children.
5. The student teacher's college supervisor calls her in two days later and tells her that she must be more careful about expressing her opinions to staff members.
6. The student teacher agrees to be more careful in the future, but she privately believes that she did the right thing in telling the principal what she thought. He had asked her for her opinion, and at least she had told him directly rather than complaining behind his back, as he had done about her. She also believes that firm, honest stands would result in better schools.

Some Issues

1. If it is true that games of elimination penalize the children who need the most practice is there any place for these games in the school curriculum? How can games such as musical chairs, or dodge ball, be changed so that children who need practice can receive it?
2. Should threats be used as a means to control children's behavior?
3. Is it ever appropriate for a student teacher to criticize the behavior of any member of the school staff?
4. Is it true that schools would be better if people took firm and honest stands with each other about their teaching methods?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What could this student teacher have done to prevent the children who had been eliminated from the game from becoming restless?

2. Suggest other responses to the principal's question, "What did you think about the morning?"
3. How can this student retain her high standards for the teaching profession and yet show more tolerance toward people who do not meet these standards—or is this possible, or even desirable?

CASE 17

The Engagement

DORA APPLETON, a laboratory school teacher at State University was speaking to Lawrence Cleveland, the Coordinator of Student Teaching. "Frankly, I have very serious doubts about Lisa's suitability for teaching. She comes to school at the last minute and she leaves as soon as she can after school, making it quite clear that she wouldn't stay at all if I didn't ask her to. Her plans are obviously done at the last minute—on the bus as she comes to school, I'm sure."

"Really, Dora? I'm quite surprised to hear that about Lisa. She's always been a fine student in the past. Her course work is excellent. Of course, that doesn't mean that she would necessarily be successful in her student teaching, but I am amazed to hear that she is being so unreliable. She was always eager to do well, and could be counted upon for extra work, and so forth. You know, she became engaged a couple of weeks ago. Do you think that has something to do with her behavior?"

"Yes, I do. In fact, I'm quite certain that her engagement is the cause of her disinterest. She's been with me for three weeks and she became engaged just about two weeks ago. Well, for the first few days after her engagement, when all of her time was spent dreaming and admiring her ring, I let it go. After all, an engagement is an important event in a young girl's life, and I would expect that to be uppermost in her mind for a time. But you just can't let your personal life interfere with your teaching to the point of becoming totally ineffective."

"I'm really sorry to hear this about Lisa. You know, Dora, the pressure that many of the senior girls feel is being put upon them to find husbands before they graduate really presents a problem. I knew what you meant when you spoke about that ring-gazing. Sometimes I think that the size of the ring means more to the girls than the qualities of their fiancés. But I rather thought Lisa would not fall victim to that. She seemed like such a serious and sincere student."

"I don't like to disappoint you, Lawrence, but I'm afraid that your estimate of Lisa isn't valid. Why, in the staff room at lunch time all she talks about is her silver pattern, and her china pattern, and the size of her wedding. Well, I've had engaged girls doing student teaching with me before, but they've managed to concentrate on school during the day. And I've had married women with children who have been marvelous workers despite the many out-of-school tasks they have. Heavens, I don't expect student teachers to give up their outside lives for school—on the contrary, I want them to have rewarding personal lives. But Lisa doesn't seem a bit interested in teaching or in the children. Why sometimes when she's sitting at the back of the room she's half asleep, with her head nodding. It seems to me that Lisa ought to make up her mind whether or not she really wants to teach, and if she doesn't, then I think she should be asked to leave the education department."

"Well, of course we will have to see if we can get at whatever it is that's keeping her from performing well. But leaving the department will be rather difficult, since she's had such a fine record until now. And she couldn't possibly acquire enough credits in another major in time for graduation."

"You know, I have the feeling that she never plans to teach at all. Her fiancé is quite well off, and I think that at this point all she cares about is drifting through and getting her degree so that she can say she's a college graduate. And I don't see why we should keep her in student teaching if she isn't performing, when you know as well as I that we have two students in many of our classrooms, and that most of them would be delighted to be alone. It's a shame to waste a space on Lisa. We're

here to prepare teachers—not to cater to young ladies who are marking time until their marriages.”

COMMENTS

The Problem

A cooperating teacher believes that her student teacher has lost interest in teaching since she became engaged, and suggests that perhaps she should be removed from the classroom. We know that:

1. The student teacher's college course work was excellent and the Coordinator of Student Teaching is surprised to hear that she is not doing well in student teaching, since she had seemed to be such a serious and sincere student.
2. The cooperating teacher says that the student comes late and leaves early, plans haphazardly, spends much of her time dreaming and admiring her ring, and generally seems uninterested in teaching. The teacher also says that in the staff room the student talks mainly of her china and silver patterns, and the size of her wedding.
3. The cooperating teacher suggests that the student teacher may never teach and may be merely drifting through in order to have a college degree, and also suggests that perhaps the student should be asked to leave student teaching and the education department.

Some Issues

1. To what extent must student teachers subordinate their personal lives to their professional ones?
2. Is there undue pressure upon college women to regard their educations and careers as being of secondary importance to engagement and marriage? or is it proper for careers to be thought of as secondary for women?

3. How important should the student teaching experience be in determining whether or not a student is allowed to remain in education?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How might the cooperating teacher or college coordinator discuss this student's behavior with her in order to effect change?
2. If the student were to improve her work, but never plans to teach, should she be allowed to remain in student teaching?

CASE 18

I'm Not a Maid *

ABOUT ONE HALF HOUR remained in the student teaching seminar, and Miss Hawkes, the college instructor, looked around at her twenty students during a brief lull in the discussion. The young people had been student teaching for two weeks, and so far most of their discussion had centered around discipline problems. Just as Miss Hawkes prepared to sum up the discussion of the day, Sarah Brill, who was at the West Street School, waved her hand and went off in a new direction—one that many students were eager to add to.

"Sometimes it seems to me that I'm more of a housekeeper than a student teacher. So far my chief duties have been that of window raiser and lowerer, window-shade puller, duster, paint mixer—and on special occasions I get to take messages to other teachers asking them for supplies!" burst from Sarah.

"Well, I know what you mean," said Jack Haskins. "My

* This case appeared originally in *The Cooperating Teacher At Work: Case Studies of Critical Incidents*, Elizabeth Hunter, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1962.

teacher is okay—we sort of share the routines, and my children are older so they can do most of that stuff themselves anyway. But yesterday the principal came in and said, 'You don't mind, Mrs. Lilly, if I borrow your young man for a moment'—and I spent the next two hours going from room to room collecting some statistics from each teacher. Let me tell you, I was pretty burned up!"

"I can top that one," said Laurie Kantor. "I was going to speak to you about this during my conference time, Miss Hawkes, but I might as well tell you now. This morning about five minutes before the beginning of school the assistant principal came into our room and said that one of the teachers would be absent. She asked me to go into the classroom until the substitute teacher arrived in about twenty minutes. Naturally I went, but it wasn't for any twenty minutes. It was for an hour and a half! And in all that time no one ever came in to tell me that the substitute would be delayed, or to help me in any way. Luckily nothing too terrible happened, and I managed to keep them fairly busy and quiet—but I don't know what I would have done if there had been any real trouble."

"Didn't your teacher wonder what happened to you?" asked Jack.

"Well, there are seventy classrooms in my school, which I suppose had something to do with my being left in that class in the first place," replied Laurie. "When I told my teacher what had happened, she said that she'd speak to the assistant principal and that she *hoped* that wouldn't happen to me again. I'd like some stronger reassurance than hope, though!"

"I'm glad that you are speaking of these experiences. Have any of the rest of you had similar ones?" asked Miss Hawkes.

George Blaine spoke next. "I've been out of my classroom for the last fifteen minutes of each morning, and about five minutes of each afternoon—doing hall and lunchroom duty. But I haven't minded at all. In fact, I've found it rather interesting. My teacher and the principal discussed this with me beforehand, and they pointed out to me that I'd benefit from

taking on a variety of duties during my stay in the school. My teacher said that as I began to do more of the actual teaching, she and I would share the outside duties—and she hopes that by the end of my student teaching period she will be able to leave the room as easily as I leave it now. Besides getting me used to other school activities, this gives me a chance to see youngsters of different ages, and that's fine with me."

Janice Henry joined the discussion. "I was in a situation somewhat similar to Laurie's, except that mine turned out better. The principal stopped at our door in the morning and said that Miss Jacobs, the teacher next door, was ill. The substitute couldn't arrive for about a half hour, and he asked if I thought I could take charge of the class until then. Of course, I said yes, although I was rather nervous about it. The principal came into the room with me and suggested that after the children were seated and the attendance taken, I might read them a story. I guess he thought that was pretty safe. So I did just that. The principal poked his head in the door once, and my teacher looked in several times—which reassured me. When the substitute came in she told me to finish the story, and she thanked me, and I said goodbye. It was quite pleasant, and I must say that the whole episode built my confidence considerably. I'm glad it happened, and I'd welcome another chance to go to other rooms."

"The other day in the hall while we were waiting to go into the assembly, a teacher passed by and asked me to carry her coat up to her room for her," said Clare Stickney. "I was sort of annoyed, but of course I would have done it. However, my teacher spoke up and said 'I'm sorry, but the college doesn't want the students to leave their own groups.' And that took care of that!"

Three of the four schools represented in the seminar had been heard from. Miss Hawkes asked if the people in the Lincoln School had had any similar experiences. There was a general shaking of heads.

"I've occasionally returned things or borrowed things for my

teacher, but I don't count that," said Doris Burke. "And my teacher asked me if I'd like to help the sixth grade teacher administer this year's achievement tests, but that's about all."

The clock showed that they were several minutes over the allotted time, and Miss Hawkes knew that some of the students had classes elsewhere in a few minutes, but she took additional time for a short comment.

"Remember that at our meeting before we started student teaching," she said, "I pointed out to you that you were guests in your schools, and that I hoped you would always be gracious guests. The staff members of these schools take on extra responsibilities and put in extra time and effort when they work with student teachers. There may be times when you will be asked to do things which seem unpleasant to you, and perhaps unprofitable. I want to talk more about this next week, and I hope that in our school meetings some of these problems can be aired. I would like to add, however, that you people are in the schools to learn to teach, not to learn to be maids or messengers."

The next afternoon as Miss Hawkes was sitting in her office planning for a meeting on the following morning at the West Street School, and wondering what the best approach would be for a tactfully frank discussion of the proper duties of a student teacher, the phone rang.

It was Sarah Brill. "I wanted to tell you of something that happened today. I was walking through the lunchroom on my way upstairs, and the room was a mess. A teacher called over to me and asked me to straighten the chairs around some of the tables before I went up. Well, I remembered what you had said yesterday about our not being maids, so I just told her that straightening chairs wasn't my job, and walked on through. I'm glad we're having this meeting tomorrow so you can tell the people in this school how to treat us."

COMMENTS

The Problem

In a discussion in a student teaching seminar it becomes clear that some of the students think they are being exploited by their schools. We know that:

1. One student thinks that she is being more of a housekeeper in her classroom than a teacher, and on the day after the seminar discussion, this student refuses to straighten out some chairs in the lunchroom when asked to do so.
2. A student complains that he was "borrowed" by the principal and used as a messenger, while another says that she was placed in a classroom supposedly for only twenty minutes until the substitute arrived, but that she was left there for an hour and a half, and no one came to tell her of the delay or help her in any way.
3. Another student says that he has some extra duties in the school, but these were discussed with him beforehand, and he believes that he benefits from these activities. Still another student says that she was asked to cover a class until a substitute arrived, but that because of the help she received from her teacher and the principal, she found it a pleasant experience and would welcome the chance to go to other rooms.
4. The seminar instructor tells the students that while they are guests in their schools, and must always be gracious guests, they are in the schools to learn to be teachers, and not to be maids or messengers.

Some Issues

1. Why is it possible for two student teachers to be asked to take on the same extra responsibility (i.e. help to ad-

minister an achievement test in another grade) with the result that one student will feel exploited and the other will be grateful for the learning experience?

2. If there is not a hard-and-fast line to be drawn between what is and is not a valid learning experience for a future teacher, how can student teachers know when they should rightfully complain of exploitation, and when they should accept out-of-the-ordinary assignments with good grace?
3. Under what conditions should student teachers be asked to act as substitutes?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How might some of the unpleasant situations described in this case have been handled by the students themselves to prevent recurrences?
2. Are there ways in which the situations described by the students as unpleasant could have been turned by them into positive learning experiences?
3. How else might the student who said that straightening chairs wasn't her responsibility have responded?

CASE 19

No Effort

VAN DONALDSON's cooperating teacher, Mr. Clark, was talking to Mr. Reynolds, Van's college supervisor. "I tell you, Mr. Reynolds, I don't think Van is doing an adequate job in his student teaching. He never brings in any extra materials—just uses our regular textbooks and workbooks without adding any resource materials of his own."

"Has he been showing you his plans in advance?" asked Mr.

Reynolds. "Does he prepare adequately for his teaching and does he cooperate with your requests?"

"Well, yes. He's never late with his work or anything like that. As you know, I've never had a student teacher before, so I have no one to judge him against. But I hear the other cooperating teachers talking about their students, and when I compare Van to them, I just don't think he's up to par. The other teachers have spoken of the trips their students are planning, and the resource people they have invited to class, and the films and filmstrips they have brought in. Well, Van hasn't done anything like that. I'm afraid that he isn't exerting any effort."

"I'm glad that you told me about this, Mr. Clark. I have a conference with Van tomorrow at the college, and I'll bring this up. When I stop in next week perhaps Van's work will have improved."

Van walked into Mr. Reynolds' office for his biweekly conference, and for the first few minutes supervisor and student talked about the upcoming basketball game. Van was one of the star players on the team. Then Mr. Reynolds brought up his conversation of the previous day with Van's cooperating teacher. "You know, Van, I had a talk with Mr. Clark yesterday, and he doesn't seem to think you are working hard enough at your teaching. I believe his exact words were that you weren't exerting any effort. He said you weren't bringing in any extra resource materials such as films or filmstrips, that you hadn't planned any trips, and that you are content to use just the texts and workbooks that are in the classroom. What about this, Van?"

"I don't exert any effort! Well, I exert as much as he does! Mr. Clark never brings in any extra resources either. He hasn't shown a film or filmstrips since I've been there. He never uses anything but the textbooks and workbooks, and he hasn't taken the kids on a trip all year. I didn't know I was supposed to do a better job than he does. Am I supposed to show him how to teach? No effort! Let's see him put forth a little as an example!"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A cooperating teacher complains that his student teacher doesn't put enough effort into his teaching, and the student replies that the teacher doesn't exert any effort either. We know that:

1. The cooperating teacher tells the college supervisor that although he had never had a student teacher before, and thus has no one else to judge the student by, he can tell from the discussion of the other cooperating teachers in the school that his student is not putting forth the same amount of effort as other students.
2. The student teacher does share his plans with the cooperating teacher, and does cooperate with him.
3. When the college supervisor tells the student teacher of his cooperating teacher's complaints, the student says that he exerts as much effort as his teacher does. He says that the teacher never brings in extra resources, and that he, the student, didn't know he was supposed to do a better job than his teacher.

Some Issues

1. To what degree should a student teacher be expected to improve upon the work of the cooperating teacher, assuming that the teacher's work could be improved?
2. Is it appropriate for students within a school to be compared to one another, or judged by their cooperating teachers against students they have had in the past? Is it possible for any student at any level to be truly judged against himself?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Suggest other responses that the student teacher might have made to his college supervisor's report?
2. How might this student be encouraged to put more effort and imagination into his teaching even if his cooperating teacher is not serving as a good model?

CASE 20

Be a Pal

EDWARD CARLSON was student teaching in the tenth grade, and he was doing an excellent job. In addition to his fine handling of subject matter, he had a good manner with the youngsters, and he was very popular with them. Frequently several class members would stay after school and help him with some projects, or talk with him about their work, or just talk with him about things in general. They often told him that they wished he'd take a job in their school when he graduated from college, so that they could still see him, or perhaps even be his students again.

One afternoon several of the youngsters asked Ed to go bowling with them on the coming weekend. "Come on, Mr. Carlson, be a pal," begged Geraldine Black. "A whole group of us are going bowling on Saturday, and we'd love to have you come with us."

"Yes, if you came we could really get up a big gang, and have a terrific time. Please come with us, Mr. Carlson," added Bob Hampton.

Ed liked to bowl, and after a few minutes of thought about his Saturday plans, he agreed to meet them at the bowling alley at ten o'clock on Saturday morning.

About twelve children from the class participated in the

bowling outing, and everyone had a splendid time. The children were well behaved, and were obviously proud to be with Mr. Carlson.

After the successful bowling event, several of the youngsters invited Ed to their homes for dinner, and since he lived by himself at the "Y" in the town where he was student teaching, he was glad to accept. He enjoyed meeting the children's parents, and the evenings spent in their homes were always pleasant.

However, when Mr. Gregson, the school principal, learned that Ed was socializing with the youngsters, he called him into the office. "I want to speak to you about the relationship you have with the children in your class, Mr. Carlson," began Mr. Gregson. "It's all right to be friendly, but I think you're spending too much time outside of school with the youngsters—and on the kind of social level that isn't quite appropriate for a teacher. After all, you are their teacher, and not just one of their pals. Remember, too, Mr. Carlson, that you are only a few years older than the girls in that group. Frankly, I don't think what you're doing is healthy, and I'm going to have to ask you to stop all after-school activities with the children in your class."

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher who goes bowling with some of the youngsters in his class, and spends some evenings with the youngsters and their families, is reprimanded by the principal. We know that:

1. The student teacher is doing an excellent job in the classroom and is popular with the children.
2. He goes bowling with a group of youngsters on a Saturday, and accepts dinner invitations from families of some of the children, spending pleasant evenings in their homes.

3. The school principal tells him that his relationship with the children is not a healthy one, that he is their teacher, not their pal, and that he will have to stop all after-school activities with them.

Some Issues

1. Is it ever appropriate for teachers or student teachers to participate in after-school social activities with some of the youngsters from their classes? If so, what kinds of activities are appropriate?
2. Is it possible for a teacher or student teacher to be a "pal" to the children he teaches and still maintain a professional relationship?
3. Does a school principal or a cooperating teacher have the right to tell a student teacher what his after-school activities should be, even if class members are involved?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How could the student teacher have refused the children's bowling invitation, and discouraged further invitations, without hurting their feelings?
2. Would the bowling outing have been more acceptable if the student teacher had involved the entire class?
3. How can the student teacher now refuse invitations from the children without blaming the principal—or should he tell the children why he is no longer able to visit their homes?
4. Should this student try to justify his behavior to the principal, or should he just accept the restrictions? If he does try to justify his actions, and even ask that he be allowed to continue, how might he do this?

IV

The Student Teacher
Works
with the College Staff

IN MOST SITUATIONS the student teacher will be visited and observed by a member of the college staff, usually called the college supervisor. Different colleges' practices differ considerably, and may vary from a supervisory visit once or twice a week to one visit for the entire student teaching period.

Some college supervisors will also meet their student teachers in regularly scheduled group meetings, but others may have contact with their students only through school visits and (usually) individual conferences dealing with these visits.

Although the cooperating teacher spends many more hours with the student teacher than does the college supervisor, and probably has more influence on the student's teaching, the college supervisor can be an important person in the student teaching experience. The cases in this chapter present some of the problems that can arise when two people try to help one student.

CASE 21

The Right Way

EMMA DEARBORN's college supervisor, Mrs. Bruce, was looking over the long-range plans that Emma had drawn up for a reading project in her classroom. Emma and her cooperating teacher, Mrs. Tracy, had decided to institute some individualized reading after attending a conference on the topic a week before, and Emma had been put in charge of the program. She had first learned about this reading method in her course on the

teaching of reading, and she was enthusiastic about the project.

Mrs. Tracy and Emma had decided to begin their individualized reading program by supplementing the basal readers with free reading from library books three days a week. Emma had compiled lists of reading materials for her grade level, and had then obtained a good supply of books by using the town library and the college library children's collection, and by having the children bring in some of their good books from home.

Emma was eager to discuss her plans with her supervisor in order to have her help and assistance. First, she told Mrs. Bruce how the plan had come into existence. Then she continued, "We plan to begin next Monday, and have what we will call a library period three days a week. Both of us believe that the children will benefit from this program. To tell you the truth, many of our children don't read as well as they might. They aren't too interested in the reading period. A few of them do keep library books in their desks which they read in their spare time, but I think many more of the children would really improve their reading and come to enjoy it if they were encouraged to use books more. What do you think of our plan?"

"If the problem is that the children aren't reading as well as they might, then I should think you'd begin to do more with them in the area of skill development. How can you expect the children to read well in these library periods if they don't have adequate reading skills?" asked Mrs. Bruce.

"Well, for one thing, I have obtained a wide variety of books of high interest that span several grade levels. It seems to me that if the children are enthusiastic about their reading they will want to improve their skills. And I believe that one of the best ways to improve reading skill is to want to read and to do a good deal of reading."

"That may be what you believe, Emma, but that isn't a basis for instituting a program in education. Latching on to a new idea because you went to a meeting, or read about it in a book or two, doesn't seem to me to be too wise. You weren't in my reading course, but as you know I've been in the reading field for a long time, and while these fads come and go, nothing will

ever replace the good sound teaching of the basic skills. There's a right way and a wrong way in teaching as in everything else, and I am convinced that you are attempting to improve the children's reading in the wrong way. I suggest that instead of going off on some wild goose chase, you get busy and analyze the particular difficulty of each child in your classroom and then give him the proper skill drills for help. And stick with your basal readers, which have proved their worth and which will aid you in skill development. Now I have many materials that will help you, and I'll be glad to lend them to you and Mrs. Tracy. For instance, here's one test that you can use for diagnosing children's reading difficulties. . . ."

COMMENTS

The Problem

When a student teacher shares her plans for an individualized reading project with her college supervisor, she is told to scrap her plans and go about the teaching of reading in "the right way." We know that:

1. A student teacher and her cooperating teacher decide to institute individualized reading periods three days a week, and both are enthusiastic about their plans. The student teacher is given charge of the program.
2. The student teacher discusses the plans with her college supervisor in order to obtain her assistance. The student tells the supervisor that one of the reasons for their decision to have the children read more widely in library books was that many of the children do not read as well as they might, and do not seem to enjoy reading.
3. The college supervisor tells the student teacher that the children need more work in skill development, not more library periods, and that nothing will replace the sound teaching of the basic skills. She says to stick with the basal

readers, diagnose the difficulty of each child, and institute the proper skill drills. She adds that there is a right way and a wrong way in teaching, as in everything else, and that the student is attempting to improve children's reading in the wrong way.

Some Issues

1. Is there a right and wrong way to teach reading? To teach any subject? If there is a broad spectrum of acceptable method and content, how does one determine what falls inside and what falls outside of the spectrum?
2. How important a factor is interesting content and individual choice in improving children's reading ability?
3. Should student teachers or teachers ever be discouraged from trying new ideas, and if so, by whom and under what conditions?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Can this student teacher continue with her individualized reading project despite the college supervisor's objections? How might she go about this?
2. Can the student combine the suggestions of the supervisor with her own plans, or is this even desirable?
3. How should this student tell her cooperating teacher about the conference with the college supervisor?

CASE 22

The Lockstep

MARY BRODERICK was student teaching in a pleasant school on the west side of town, and she was happy there. Her cooperating teacher, Miss Minton, was a lovely person, and they worked well

together. Mary enjoyed the children, and Miss Minton was wonderful about encouraging her teaching and about giving her all the materials and suggestions she could. In fact, everyone in the school was helpful, and things were going along well.

On a Wednesday afternoon, after she had been with Miss Minton for four weeks, Mary had a conference with Mrs. Felden, her college supervisor. Mrs. Felden had observed her teaching the day before, and although they had had a brief chat then, Mary was eager to discuss further her student teaching experiences.

"Come in, Mary," Mrs. Felden greeted her. "I'm a bit behind schedule, I'm afraid, because you student teachers have so much to talk about! Well, how are things going? Tell me about what you're doing in your classroom, and so forth."

"I'm very happy there—Miss Minton is so nice—and so is everyone in the school. I'm really lucky to be there."

"Miss Minton does seem to be a nice person, though her curriculum doesn't appear to be terribly exciting. What do you think of her program?"

"I think she's a good teacher. Oh, she doesn't do much grouping except for reading, and perhaps she's not the most modern teacher around, but she's a lovely person, and very helpful. The children in her class really love school."

"Do you think she would let you group the children and individualize your teaching a bit more?" asked Mrs. Felden. "I wondered at your arithmetic lesson with the whole class, yesterday. You know, we've talked so much about not using lockstep methods. What would she think about your trying some groups in arithmetic?"

"Well, I wouldn't want to offend Miss Minton by suggesting that her method of teaching arithmetic isn't good. And besides, I'm not sure if I'd know how to go about grouping the class."

"What about her reading program then? She has that supposedly magic number of three groups, and she seems to be wedded to the basal series and workbooks."

"But she knows how to make the stories interesting to the

children," Mary defended her teacher. "You should see her at work—I think she does a marvelous job with reading. And she does differentiate the workbook assignments, and she adds interesting seat-work materials."

"Do you think she might let you *try* something different in reading?" asked Mrs. Felden.

"Yes, I'm quite sure she would, but the children read very well. And they use library books a great deal."

"Perhaps you'll have an excuse for trying something different the next time I come," said Mrs. Felden. "You could say that we'd been talking in our course about grouping for arithmetic, for example, and tell her that you'd like to give it a try the next time I come to observe you. I've found that works sometimes for students who want to branch out a bit."

"But I feel so comfortable the way things are," replied Mary, "and I honestly think that we do quite a bit of individualizing within the whole class—not necessarily by physical separation, but by different questions and methods, and so forth, with different children. I really believe that Miss Minton is a good teacher, and I'd be happy if I could be like her."

"I'm sure that Miss Minton is a lovely person—I'm not denying that. But I'd like to see you doing things a bit more imaginatively, while you're still young and eager. Why don't you see if you can group the children for arithmetic? Most of the other students are doing that, and I'd really like to see you break out of the lockstep, Mary."

COMMENTS

The Problem

A college supervisor tries to convince a student teacher that she should break the lockstep in her cooperating teacher's class by trying more grouping and individualization of instruction with the children. We know that:

1. The student teacher is happy in her school and classroom, likes her cooperating teacher, and thinks the teacher does a good job.
2. The college supervisor says that while it is true that the cooperating teacher is a nice person, her curriculum isn't very exciting, and the student should try to break the lock-step while she is still young and eager.
3. The college supervisor makes several suggestions to the student about how she might change her teaching, but the student is most reluctant to try any of these, saying that the children are learning and are happy, and that she would not want to offend her teacher.
4. The college supervisor persists in trying to have the student do as she suggests, saying that most of the other students are trying these things.

Some Issues

1. How much can or should a student teacher deviate from the teaching of the cooperating teacher?
2. If the student teacher is comfortable with the methods of the cooperating teacher, should she try to change to conform to the wishes of the college supervisor?
3. Which person should have more influence in determining the methods used by the student teacher—the college supervisor, or the cooperating teacher?
4. Should student teachers be expected to try out methods they have learned about in college if the college places them in classrooms where these methods are not used?
5. Student teachers and cooperating teachers often develop close relationships with each other which sometimes result in both resenting suggestions from the third person, the college supervisor. How can recognition of this situation help the student teacher cope with it?

6. Is it possible to utilize individualized and group instruction without actual physical separation of the class?
7. Is the college supervisor trying to initiate lockstep conditions of a different kind?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What else might this student have said to the college supervisor if the student really believes that the curriculum in her classroom is fine in its present form?
2. Should the student accept the college supervisor's advice and try grouping the children for arithmetic—and if so, why?

CASE 23

Usually

Miss GOODSON felt rather anxious about the first visit of her student teacher's college supervisor, and she and her student, Mark Willis, prepared for that visit with great care. They went over all of the plans together, and discussed everything down to the smallest detail. Both were eager to please: Mark, for all of the usual reasons and because he knew that Dr. Jarvis would grade him in student teaching, and Miss Goodson because she couldn't help feeling as if she were on trial. She had never had a student teacher before, and she wanted Dr. Jarvis to have a good impression of her class and their work, and of her.

The children had been told that a visitor was coming and that they would be expected to be on their best behavior. The classroom was very clean and the bulletin boards had been carefully prepared. The room looked as it did for parent visiting day.

During the morning of Dr. Jarvis' observation, Mark reviewed a new concept in math, did some spelling review and gave a

spelling test to the top group of spellers, and led a history discussion. Miss Goodson thought he did excellent work.

Mark, Miss Goodson, and Dr. Jarvis had decided to talk together during the children's gym period, and as the children left, they sat down around the library table. "I think Mark did very well this morning, Miss Goodson," began Dr. Jarvis.

"Oh yes, he's been doing good work since the day he arrived. I'm so pleased to have him with us, and I know the children are happy too," replied Miss Goodson. "I'm glad to hear you say that he did well because I certainly thought he did. How about you, Mark, what did you think of the morning?"

"I was relieved that things went as well as they did. I am a bit concerned, though, about the fact that the concept I introduced in math yesterday hasn't taken hold as well as I had hoped. The children seemed to have quite a bit of trouble with it."

"Well," said Miss Goodson, "we can't expect everyone to get things the first time. I'm sure that with another day or two of review, everyone will understand."

"Yes, and you'll find that you keep getting better at explaining new ideas as you teach more," added Dr. Jarvis. "Speaking of the math, I noticed that you tend to call on different children until you finally get the right answer. How can you be sure, then, that the ones who didn't know really understand? Do you think you might stick with the child who doesn't know, and *help* him to understand—and thus review and reintroduce for the rest of the class?"

"You have something there," mused Mark. "I never thought about that. But if I stopped to help every child, wouldn't the others become bored?"

"I think Mark was a bit nervous because of your visit, Dr. Jarvis," said Miss Goodson. "He usually doesn't do that. In fact, our children are very quick, and we seldom have trouble like that. I think that the children might also have been a bit disconcerted by your presence. We aren't too used to having visitors in our classroom."

"That may very well have had an effect, as you say, Miss

Goodson. Well," continued Dr. Jarvis, "do you have any other comments, Mark? How do you think the spelling went?"

"I like the way Miss Goodson groups the children for spelling," replied Mark. "It really makes sense. I guess you saw from my plans that I was testing the best spellers, while the other groups were doing a variety of things. I thought things went smoothly."

"I certainly did notice the grouping for spelling, and, Miss Goodson, you don't know how pleased I am to see that! You really have a fine class here, and you're doing so many interesting things. I noticed some of your activities from the bulletin boards, and they are excellent. One thing, Mark, that I would like to suggest about the spelling—wouldn't it be a good idea to check correct spellings immediately? You know, get the words up on the board, and perhaps even let the children correct their own papers."

"I think it may be my fault if Mark doesn't reinforce their learning right away, which is what you are suggesting, Dr. Jarvis. I've never done the spelling that way, though I guess it's a good idea. And frankly, I prefer not to have the children correct their own papers. Don't blame Mark for that."

"Oh, I'm not *blaming* Mark—just making some comments. Heavens, there's nothing to blame! I think he's doing well. In fact, I had only one other suggestion down in my notes. I wonder, Mark, if you might try leading a discussion without so much reliance on hand raising. I'm thinking of the history discussion. I noticed that many of the same children were doing most of the talking. Do you think that you might designate children yourself—for instance, saying, 'Linda, what do you think of this and so?' By now, you are beginning to have some idea of the children's capabilities, and you can use this to stretch some, to give confidence to others, and so forth."

"That seems like a good idea," said Mark. "I've noticed, of course, that often the same children do most of the talking. I try to keep them from raising their hands in the middle of someone else's contribution, but perhaps I should just do away with hand raising completely."

"Usually, however, many more children participate, Dr. Jarvis. I just don't know what was wrong today. Usually things go so well in this class. You really mustn't think too harshly of Mark," pleaded Miss Goodson.

COMMENTS

The Problem

A cooperating teacher and a student teacher prepare with great care for the first visit of the college supervisor, each eager to make a good impression. The college supervisor says that the student is doing well, but makes a few suggestions, and the cooperating teacher becomes rather defensive. We know that:

1. The student teacher and the cooperating teacher want to please the college supervisor, and prepare carefully for his first visit.
2. In a conference following the student's teaching, the college supervisor says that the student has done well, but offers a few suggestions for improvement. The student teacher accepts the suggestions, and is able to express some concerns of his own, but the cooperating teacher seems threatened by the supervisor, and acts as if she were the attorney for the defense.
3. The suggestions of the college supervisor are that the student be more concerned with the children who do *not* know the correct answers; that the correct spelling of words given on a spelling test be checked immediately, perhaps by the children themselves; and that the student might designate speakers himself rather than rely upon hand raisers.
4. The cooperating teacher says that the children may have been disconcerted by the presence of a visitor, that Mark was not up to his usual performance because of his nerv-

ousness at the supervisor's presence, that the student did not check correct spellings immediately because she, herself, never does, that she does not wish the children to correct their own papers, and that usually participation in class discussion is much wider.

Some Issues

1. Should cooperating teacher and student teacher make special preparations for the visit of the college supervisor, or should they try to show the supervisor their regular activities? Is it possible *not* to make any special preparations, or *not* to be somewhat apprehensive at this first visit?
2. Why is it that cooperating teachers may feel that any suggestion for improvement coming from the college supervisor should be rebutted? Why does the teacher feel anxious about the student's work?
3. What about some of the supervisor's suggestions: what are the weaknesses of teaching by merely calling on those children who know the right answers? why should teachers try for immediate reinforcement even after testing? what about having children check their own efforts? how about leading discussions without hand raising?
4. Should children be told in advance of the visit of the college supervisor, and if so, what should they be told?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Could this student teacher have said anything which would have eased the anxiety of his cooperating teacher, either before the visit or during the conference?
2. What can the student do after the conference is over to make the teacher feel less threatened?

V

Relationships with Parents



THERE was a time when parents had little direct contact with the schools, other than when the principal or teacher called in a parent to inform him that his child was being obstreperous in some way. Now, however, parents often participate widely in the life of the school, and it is important for teachers to be able to work well with them.

Student teachers may or may not have any opportunity to meet and talk with parents, but they should take advantage of any positive opportunities that arise. The cases in this chapter relate some happenings that involve student teachers, cooperating teachers, and parents.

CASE 24

A Little Chat

LOIS RIDDEN was doing her grocery shopping at the neighborhood supermarket. She and two other students from the university shared an apartment in the town where they were student teaching for the semester. As she pushed her cart along the aisle a woman stopped her and said, "Aren't you Miss Ridden? I thought I saw you in Mr. Kall's class the other day. I'm Mrs. Jane, Billy's mother. How do you like our town? Good. And are you enjoying your student teaching? I'm so glad. I was a teacher for two years before I married and I was so happy when student teachers came to our school. I know how much they

can add to a program. Billy speaks of you often. He likes you. Tell me, how is he doing in school? What do you think of his arithmetic? He has trouble with long division, and I've been helping him a bit at home."

"Well, I've been working with his group—the slower ones—in arithmetic, and he does need some special help."

"The slower ones? Oh, I didn't know that the children in Billy's group were slow. Are you sure he's getting enough attention?"

"Well, Mr. Kall has given me that group for the next two weeks, and I'm certainly going to do my best. Mr. Kall has been doing some wonderful things with the top group. Why you should see those children work with the slide rule!"

"Really! Why I'm sure that Billy would like learning to use a slide rule. Tell me, how do you think Billy's reading is coming?"

"Billy spends a lot of time dreaming when he should be working, I'm afraid. I've been sitting with him during silent reading time, and then he's better—but on his own he does tend to fool around."

"That's funny. Mr. Kall hasn't mentioned any of this to me. When I talk with him I get the impression that Billy is doing well. In fact, Mr. Kall doesn't seem to think I should help Billy at home, so I've let up a bit. Billy is really a capable child, I know it. I think sometimes that he's too bright. You know, bright children don't always do well in school. Somehow Billy has never been lucky enough to have a teacher who understands him."

"Oh, Mr. Kall is a fine teacher, and I'm sure that he understands Billy." Lois began to worry about what she had said to Mrs. Jane, and decided she had better end their conversation. "It's been nice talking with you, Mrs. Jane. And don't worry about Billy—I'm sure he'll be just fine."

Next morning at school, Mr. Kall greeted Lois with, "You really managed to fix things with your little chat in the supermarket yesterday. I should think that you would know better than to discuss children with parents in the way that you did. Mrs. Jane has been driving Billy since the day he was born, and

this year the guidance counselor and I decided to try to get Mrs. Jane to ease up at home, while we eased up on Billy here. Now you've spoiled everything. Mrs. Jane called the principal last night and wanted to know why her child was being taught by a mere student teacher, someone completely unprepared to teach, while other children were receiving the benefit of more time with the regular teacher. She said she wasn't going to stand for that, and that either her child was going to be taught by a real teacher or she'd go straight to the school board. What do you think of that?"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher makes some statements to a parent that cause the parent to become upset about the kind of education her child is receiving. We know that:

1. The student teacher tells the parent that her child is in the slow arithmetic group.
2. That group is currently being taught by the student teacher, while the regular teacher is working with the fast arithmetic group.
3. The student tells the parent that her child fools around and dreams when he should be working, and that he needs special help in his work.
4. The parent says that her child is bright, but is not understood; and later tells the principal that if her child isn't taught by the regular teacher, instead of an inexperienced student, she will go straight to the school board.
5. The cooperating teacher tells the student teacher that she should know better than to discuss the child as she did, and that now she has "spoiled everything."

Some Issues

1. Should parents know the level of the academic groups their children are in?
2. What kinds of information are appropriate for student teachers to give to parents about their children?
3. What effect does the use of such terms as "fools around" have upon parents?
4. Should a student teacher become identified with one academic group over a period of time? Should he have experience with all of the classroom groups?
5. Why might a classroom teacher assign a student teacher to work with slower children while continuing to work with the fast groups himself?
6. Is it detrimental to children to be taught by inexperienced student teachers?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How might this student have shown the parent that she was interested and concerned, without giving specific information about the child's level of achievement?
2. How might the student have given the parent the information she did, but in a way that would have been more acceptable to the parent?
3. Suggest other responses to the parent's question, "Tell me, how do you think Billy's reading is coming?"
4. When the student teacher realizes at the end of the conversation that she has said some things that were probably not appropriate, could she have done anything to improve matters?

5. How should the student teacher respond to the cooperating teacher when he confronts her with the consequences of her "little chat."
6. What can the principal and cooperating teacher do now?

CASE 25

Who Do They Think They Are?

THE TEACHERS at the Bingham Street School were having lunch together in the staff room, and Lydia Grant, a student from the university, was with them. Lydia was the only student teacher in the school, and she was included in all the staff activities, including informal staff-room discussion.

Liz Merrill had received a note from a parent that morning, asking that her boy receive more attention in reading. The note stated that the child was falling behind only because he was in a slower reading group than he should be, and that his poor reading was merely the result of boredom. Mrs. Merrill was quite annoyed.

"That Mrs. Crown is really something. I remember how she bothered you last year, Jim, and she hasn't changed a bit. She's so determined that her Johnny is going to be the best student and go to the best college, and Johnny just doesn't have it. Mrs. Crown is a pest! She thinks that she knows more about teaching than I do, and I've a good mind to call her in and tell her what I think of her and all the other parents around here who are just like her."

"Well, it won't do you any good," said Jim Teller, who had been John's fifth grade teacher. "I practically told her to stop bothering me and mind her own affairs last year, but all she did was tell every other parent who would listen that I was a completely inadequate teacher, and that John would be fine if he could only have a teacher who would really challenge him. Challenge him! That's a laugh!"

"Poor Johnny," said Elvira James. "In first grade he cried every morning for days, and his mother wasn't at all sympathetic or helpful about it. She used to try to shame him into stopping by pointing out to him that all the other children were behaving like real school children, while he was behaving like a baby. I tried to do what I could to make her see that John needed support, but she's such a pusher that she couldn't understand. No coddling for her child! If he was going to get ahead in this world he needed to get going. And his reaction to her is to just not bother trying to get ahead at all. I know she blames the school, but perhaps that's because she just can't face blaming herself."

"Well, she's not going to get away with blaming me," said Mrs. Merrill. "I've got a good mind, as I said before, to really let her have it. Parents like her irritate me. Who do they think they are, anyway? Extra attention! And moving him to a better reading group! Why he already gets more attention than most of the others. Mrs. Crown doesn't really care so much about John's work as she cares about having him in the top group so that she can tell the other mothers how well John is doing—better than their children. I *am* going to call her in for a conference, and really give her a piece of my mind. Tell her to stop trying to interfere with my teaching."

"I think she needs help, Liz," said Miss James. "She's already so confused and driven that if you do as you say, she'll just be more defensive and attack you and the school even more."

"Look, Elvira, I'm not a psychiatrist and neither are you, so don't give me any of that stuff. Did you get anywhere with Mrs. Crown with your approach? She's worse every year, and I can tell you that I'm going to settle her now, in the beginning of the year. I don't intend to have any mother telling me how to run my classroom."

"You know, Mrs. Merrill," said Lydia, "I think that Miss James is right. It seems to me that if you attack Mrs. Crown she'll just become worse and cause more trouble for you and for John. I remember Professor Morris talking about a case like this in class, when we were discussing relationships with par-

ents. He felt that parents should be regarded as partners in the education of their children, and should be consulted and have their problems and needs taken account of most sympathetically."

"My dear Lydia," said Mrs. Merrill, "something you will have to learn is that it's one thing for your college professor to sit there in his pleasant ivory tower and talk about idyllic relationships between parents and teachers, and it's quite another to be in school and dealing with these mothers and fathers. I know that parents have their problems, but so do I, and frankly I just don't intend to be browbeaten by them, and I don't intend to have my curriculum dictated by them. Nor do I intend to have parents think they can send me notes casually telling me of their children's great potentialities, which would blossom forth if only I knew what I were doing. You haven't had any experience with parents yet—just you wait. And I bet your Professor Morris hasn't either, or at least hasn't for twenty years, since the days when parents never came near the schools anyway. In those days parents assumed that teachers knew what they were doing. Nowadays—well! Who do they think they are?"

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher disagrees with a regular teacher about how to deal with a parent who has written a note asking that her child receive extra attention. We know that:

1. A parent has written to a teacher asking that her son receive additional help in reading, and says that his poor reading is merely the result of boredom.
2. The teacher reacts negatively to what she considers to be this undue pressure from the parent and is supported in her reaction by the man who was the child's teacher the year before.

3. Another teacher suggests that the parent is confused and needs help.
4. The student teacher says that the parent should receive kind and sympathetic treatment.
5. The child's teacher rejects this suggestion and says that she does not intend to have her curriculum dictated by parents, and adds that the student's education courses are taught by people who are removed from school experience.

Some Issues

1. Under what conditions is it appropriate for parents to request special help for their children?
2. What kinds of professional responsibilities do teachers have toward parents, even when parents are critical of them?
3. How can teachers best give each other advice about courses of action?
4. Does the student teacher have a different role from a regular teacher when it comes to supplying advice or data?
5. What should be the role of parents in determining the school curriculum?
6. Why are student teachers and new teachers often told by more experienced teachers that their schooling has been too ideal and theoretical, removed from experience?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How might the parent have phrased the note to obtain a more positive reaction from the teacher?
2. How could the teacher have reacted more positively to the note once it arrived?

3. Suggest ways in which the student might have expressed her viewpoint to the child's teacher so as not to cause a negative reaction.
4. How can student teachers (and new teachers) deal with the "you-might-as-well-forget-what-you've-learned-at-college" kind of remark from older teachers?

CASE 26

What Shall I Do Now?

THERE WAS a sign on Miss Blake's classroom door that read, TESTING—DO NOT ENTER. But the door opened and Mrs. Jones, George's mother, entered the seventh grade classroom.

"Did George find his coat, Miss Blake? He lost it, and I thought it might be here in school. And I want you to know that he wasn't sick yesterday when he didn't come in—he played hookey and went to the movies."

Miss Blake walked quickly over to Mrs. Jones and said, "We're giving some important tests this morning, Mrs. Jones, and I wonder if you would mind stepping into the hall and discussing this with Miss Hall, our student teacher. George, would you please step outside with Miss Hall and your mother? Thank you so much." Miss Blake ushered them all out into the hall and quickly got back to section four of the achievement test which she had just begun to explain to the class.

Outside in the corridor, Mrs. Jones turned on George and began, "I don't know what I'm going to do with you. I've tried and tried to make you into a good boy, but you won't listen." Tears began to stream down Mrs. Jones' face. "I work so hard for you and you're not worth it. I saved for a month for your new coat and now you've gone and lost it. You don't care about anything. Do you know," she said, turning to Miss Hall, "he didn't come to school yesterday because he went to the movies. And do you know how he got the money to go to the movies? He stole it from my pocketbook!"

George stood looking at his mother, sullen and resentful, but with tears of shame rising in his eyes. "What did you have to come here for? Don't you know any better than to follow me to school? They don't know about my coat, and what do they care, anyway." He began to sob, "I hate you, I hate you," and he turned and ran down the hall and out the side door.

Betty Hall watched George run out, and then turned and stared at Mrs. Jones. This was Betty's third day of student teaching, and she thought frantically, "What shall I do now?"

COMMENTS

The Problem

An inexperienced student teacher suddenly finds herself in a situation in which a mother and son express strong resentment against each other. We know that:

1. A mother comes to school unexpectedly, says that she doesn't know what to do about her son, and accuses him of being a truant and a thief.
2. The child tells the mother that he hates her, that she shouldn't have come to school, and runs out of the building.
3. The student teacher, who has been sent into the hall with the mother and child because the teacher is testing the class, does not know how to handle the situation.

Some Issues

1. Should parents be allowed to come into schools and classrooms without formal appointments?
2. Should parents bring out-of-school problems into the schools?
3. Should student teachers be expected to handle this kind of situation? Would this student be more capable of

handling this when she is a teacher, perhaps six months from now?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. In what other ways might the parent have sought help from the school?
2. Could the cooperating teacher have handled the matter differently under the circumstances? Should she have sent the child out of the room?
3. What might the student teacher have done to help the mother and child once she was pushed into the situation? Would it have been possible to say anything which would help the mother and support the child at the same time?
4. What can be done now by the student teacher? By the cooperating teacher?

CASE 27

Paper and Pencil

THE SCHOOL DAY had ended and Mrs. Loeb, the kindergarten teacher, had to leave for an Early Childhood Education Council meeting. She left Jean Grey, the student teacher, in charge of the few kindergarten children whose mothers hadn't picked them up yet. Jean had been with the class for three weeks now, and she loved every minute of it. Mrs. Loeb had a marvelous program—so creative and imaginative. Jean was gradually taking over more and more responsibility, and she was completely convinced now that she wanted to work with kindergarten children next year when she finished college.

Erica Collins' mother was the last to arrive. Erica was a delightful child; so quick and eager. Mrs. Collins and Jean had met before, and Jean thought Mrs. Collins very pleasant.

"Tell me, Miss Grey," said Mrs. Collins as Erica finished the puzzle she was working. "What do you think of children learning to read in kindergarten? Don't you think that the children should at least be learning the alphabet and the sounds of the letters? The reason I ask is that they do this in several kindergartens I know of. Erica's cousins were visiting us this weekend and they brought worksheets they had done in kindergarten that were wonderful. Perhaps you know the kind. They trace the letters, and draw lines to matching letters and words, and color in number pages—four balls, four cars and so forth. Excellent activities, I think."

"Well, I don't know," replied Jean hesitantly. She had been encouraged by Mrs. Loeb to speak with parents, but she didn't want to say anything undiplomatic. "The children here are counting all the time—for milk and cookies, for bringing their chairs to the circle, the days in the week. Why Erica knows a great deal about numbers, and I know that she can read them."

"That's true, but I think it would be good for her to have practice with more formal work. The things that Erica brings home—paintings and so forth, or stories that she has dictated to Mrs. Loeb—are very nice, and certainly Erica loves coming here, but there's something about real work that means more. The children are learning so much when they have real school work, don't you think?"

"Many of the children in our class know the alphabet. We have a number of interesting alphabet books. In fact, Erica knows every letter. And she can already read quite a few words from the signs that Mrs. Loeb puts up around the room, and from the big story book with the children's group stories. Erica loves to find words she has met before."

"Well, that's true, but I think that's because she's so eager to learn. I'm not saying that she doesn't know as much as her cousins. But I really wonder if she is being prepared for the first grade as well as they are."

"Mrs. Loeb has a marvelous program. The children here are busy learning so many things. Why they knew more about how roads are built, because of what they did in connection with

the new road going up on the next block, then I did when I came here. And they know how to solve a lot of their own problems, and they are so imaginative."

"I'm sure you're right, and certainly we all love Mrs. Loeb. But after all, they learn these things outside of school. It seems to me that ultimately school should deal with real school work, as I said before. It doesn't hurt children to sit in their chairs and work with paper and pencil. It's good for them and it certainly prepares them for the later grades, don't you think?"

"Well, you may be right. But I do think that Mrs. Loeb is a wonderful teacher. I hope I can be half as good next year when I'm on my own."

"I'm sure I'm right, and I'm glad you see my point, Miss Grey. I think that I'm going to get some of the other mothers together to see what we can do. And I'm delighted to have had this chance to talk with you. Come, Erica, we have to be getting along."

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher is confronted with a parent who thinks that the kindergarten should contain more formal academic work. The student teacher doesn't seem to agree, but isn't able to present her viewpoint in any convincing manner. We know that:

1. The parent believes that her child should be doing more academic work—"real school work," as she calls it.
2. The student teacher thinks that the present kindergarten program is creative and imaginative, and that the children are learning many valuable things.
3. The parent wonders if her child is being prepared for the first grade as well as she might be.

4. The student says that the parent may be right in thinking that paper and pencil work is good for children.
5. The parent decides to get together with some of the other mothers to see if they can't do something about putting more formal work into the kindergarten program.

Some Issues

1. What are the objectives of a kindergarten program, and what is the place of formal academic work in these objectives?
2. Is the purpose of the kindergarten primarily to prepare children for the first grade?
3. What constitutes valuable learning?
4. Should student teachers be expected to understand clearly the goals of their cooperating teachers, and be able to explain these goals to parents?
5. If the goals of the cooperating teacher and the student teacher differ, how should this be handled when talking with parents?
6. What should be the role of parents in curriculum change?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How might this student teacher and parent have spoken with each other about the kindergarten program and the children in ways that were not detrimental to the cooperating teacher involved?
2. Suggest ways in which the student teacher might have helped the parent understand and accept the goals of this particular kindergarten program. How might the student have explained an informal kindergarten readiness program?

3. Should the student teacher now say or do anything to prevent the parent from meeting with other parents to change the kindergarten program?

CASE 28

An Easy Conference

"How *would* you like to meet with Bob Golden's mother without me?" asked Mrs. Grenville. "You've been in on about ten parent conferences now, and I believe that you're ready to try one by yourself. What do you think?"

"Well, I'd like to, Mrs. Grenville, if you think I'm ready," replied Allen Kelly, Mrs. Grenville's student teacher. "Bob is great. He's cooperative, and his work is excellent. I'm sure that I'll be able to handle everything without any trouble."

Mrs. Grenville was delighted that Allen was so willing to accept sole responsibility for a conference. When Allen first sat in on Mrs. Grenville's conferences with parents, he had merely listened and absorbed. Gradually Mrs. Grenville had asked his opinions about things and had thus brought him easily into discussions with parents. She was sure Allen was ready to be on his own, and this would be an easy conference—no problems, a cooperative parent and a cooperative child.

Allen was pleased at the prospect of conducting a conference by himself. He knew how fortunate he was to be with a teacher like Mrs. Grenville, who took the time to prepare him for the many responsibilities of teaching. In only five months Allen would be a teacher himself, and he felt that he would be able to work well with parents, thanks to Mrs. Grenville.

The conference was scheduled for Friday at 3:30. As Allen took Bob's folder out, he thought: Bob is a good student, his grades are excellent, he can always be counted upon, he's popular with the other kids, and he's a happy cheerful boy. There certainly won't be any problems in this conference!

When Friday afternoon arrived, Allen looked forward eagerly

to 3:30 and his meeting with Mrs. Golden. Mrs. Grenville had spoken to Bob's mother about having her conference with the student teacher, and Mrs. Golden had said that she'd be delighted to participate. Mrs. Grenville was really putting Allen on his own—leaving the room and building completely.

When the children and Mrs. Grenville had left and Mrs. Golden came into the room, Allen greeted her and led her to the library table where they could sit and talk informally. He had learned from Mrs. Grenville that this seating arrangement usually led to better results than having teacher and parent sit on opposite sides of a desk.

"Well, it's a lovely day, Mr. Kelly," said Mrs. Golden. "You must be glad that it's Friday—and such a nice one, at that."

"Well, you might be surprised to hear this, but I like it so much here that I actually look forward to Monday!" replied Allen. "However, it is a fine day. We all commented on that during recess. The children enjoy the spring weather. Bob joined in the softball game today. He's really a good player."

"Yes, Bob has always been pretty good at sports. I'm glad that he enjoys them so much."

"Bob's school work is very good, Mrs. Golden. He's a wonderful student. We can always count on him for ideas and good solid work. He's a pleasure to teach."

"How nice of you to say that. Bob has always liked school, and of course we're delighted that he does."

"Bob gets along so well with the other children, too," said Allen. "He's really well liked by everyone."

"Well, good—I'm glad to hear that," commented Mrs. Golden.

There was a pause as Allen wondered what to say next. He had mentioned academic work, getting along with others, sports. Bob had no problems so there wasn't much to discuss, really. "Let's see," he thought, "I'll ask how Bob seems to feel about our activities."

"Does Bob talk much about school? Does he seem interested in our latest activities?"

"Oh my, yes," replied Mrs. Golden. "He's been reading for his new social studies assignment, and he's always full of news

about everything that goes on here. We enjoy listening to him talk about his school life."

There was another pause while Allen wondered what else he might bring up. Not even ten minutes had passed, and Mrs. Grenville's conferences always lasted at least half an hour. There had never been any silent stretches in the other parent meetings, but this one seemed rather dull. Allen couldn't think of anything else to say.

Mrs. Golden came to his rescue. "Mr. Kelly, I've enjoyed our talk so much, and I'm glad that I had this chance to meet you. Bob speaks of you often. I'm sure that you're going to make a fine teacher. Now I think I'll run along—unless you have something else that you'd like to discuss with me."

"No, I don't have anything else. As I've said, Bob is so cooperative and he does so well in school. I've enjoyed talking with you about him, and I want to thank you for coming in this afternoon."

When Mrs. Golden had left, Allen stood at the door for a few minutes, feeling terribly let down. Easy conference! It hadn't been easy at all. As a matter of fact it hadn't even been interesting, thanks to him. Allen felt embarrassed that Mrs. Golden had bothered to make the trip to school—she certainly hadn't learned anything that she didn't know before. What a waste of time! Allen was glad that Mrs. Grenville hadn't been there to see what a poor job he had done. Why had he thought discussing Bob would be so easy!

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher is disappointed because his first parent conference doesn't seem to have been successful. We know that:

1. Both the student teacher and the cooperating teacher thought that this particular parent conference would be

an easy one to handle, because the child to be discussed is a good student, cooperative and well liked.

2. The parent is cooperative and has agreed to have her conference with the student teacher.
3. The student teacher could not find much to say to the parent, and the conference was shorter than the cooperating teacher's usual conferences. The student teacher feels that his first conference is a failure.

Some Issues

1. What are the factors that make parent conferences easy or difficult?
2. Is there less to talk about with a parent whose child has few difficulties in school?
3. Is there a logical specified time length for conferences—and should each parent expect the same number of conferences? How can one decide about these matters?
4. By what standards can conferences be judged successful?
5. What kinds of conferences should student teachers join in, and what kinds should they take over by themselves—if any?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Should the cooperating teacher have picked a more difficult child for the student teacher's first conference, so that he would have more problems to discuss?
2. What additional things might the student teacher have said to the parent—or was his discussion adequate?
3. Are the student's feelings of failure justified? Is there anything that this student or his cooperating teacher should do now that the conference has ended?

VI

*The Student Teacher
Is Evaluated*

EVALUATION SHOULD, of course, be a continuous process and one designed to help student teachers achieve consistently more objective and helpful self-evaluative skills.

Many colleges ask cooperating teachers to write a final evaluation of the student, a kind of summing-up, and this is often kept in the student's permanent folder, perhaps to be seen by future employers. Often the student teacher is also asked to evaluate his over-all performance in writing at the end of the student teaching period. The forms used for evaluation vary considerably from short checklist to long essay, and some combine aspects of each. The cases in this chapter discuss these final evaluations.

CASE 29

I Heartily Recommend

I CAN HEARTILY RECOMMEND Beatrice Santelli for a teaching position in the upper elementary grades. Miss Santelli was a student teacher in my fifth grade class for ten weeks during her senior year in college, and I found her to be a most interesting person, and one who has much to offer to teaching.

Her manner with children was excellent, and the children adored her. She always had time for them, and when it came to understanding children and helping them with their problems, Miss Santelli was the most empathetic person I have ever known.

I can honestly say that she helped two or three children whom I had thought were beyond help. She showed an interest in their problems and their work, and their achievement went up amazingly as a result.

Miss Santelli is bursting with good ideas, and she is able to interest children in even the most routine activities. She was able to make arithmetic drill seem like fun. She brought many extra materials and resources to our classroom; she tried some really ambitious projects that were on a high intellectual level, and always managed to make them understandable to the youngsters. She knew how to go after important concepts rather than rote facts, and I can honestly say that I learned at least as much from Miss Santelli's teaching as she did from mine.

Miss Santelli is not a conventional person and her dress can be described as somewhat unusual, or bohemian. At times, she seemed rather thrown together, and it would not be uncommon for her to have ripped seams, or hanging hems, and her stockings were seldom straight or without runs. Her hair, which she wore in rather an odd style, usually appeared to need combing. I mention all of this because a potential employer might be put off by her appearance.

Miss Santelli does not put much stock in having a spotless classroom with neat bulletin boards. In my classroom she had many activities going on, and the least of her emphasis was on cleaning up. However, she put so much effort into the real learning of the children, and into working with ideas, that I never minded the looks of the room.

If I were an administrator, I would not miss the chance of hiring Miss Santelli, despite her departure from what we think of as the usual school teacher.

COMMENTS

The Problem

A cooperating teacher writes an evaluation of a student teacher which praises the student extravagantly for her obvious

strengths, but does not hesitate to point out the student's departure from the norm. We know that:

1. The cooperating teacher says that this student is wonderful with children; able to help every child learn; make the most routine activities interesting; teaches important concepts rather than rote facts; and adds that she, the teacher, learned at least as much from this experience as she taught the student.
2. The cooperating teacher also says that the student is not a conventional person, her appearance is somewhat unusual, she is rather messy, and doesn't put much stock in such things as clean classrooms.
3. The cooperating teacher ends by saying that if she were an administrator she would certainly hire this student, even if she is not poured from the usual school teacher mold.

Some Issues

1. What obligations do cooperating teachers and college supervisors have to write frankly about the student's attributes—especially if these are the sort that might keep a really desirable person from being hired?
2. This cooperating teacher has written what seems to be a thoroughly forthright statement about her student teacher. There is, however, a tendency for cooperating teachers to write rather innocuous statements about students who are average or weak—statements that touch lightly or not at all on weaknesses. Why do you think this is so?
3. What is the relative importance of classroom appearance, bulletin boards, personal appearances of teachers—or children—in the teaching-learning scheme?
4. How much should student teachers or teachers be expected to adapt themselves to the image of the "usual" school teacher?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. How could this report have been written differently, still mentioning the student's characteristics, but making her somewhat more appealing to the average administrator?
2. Should the cooperating teacher have attempted to change this student's appearance, and if so, how might she have done this?

CASE 30

A Difference of Opinion

CLARK BERRY and his cooperating teacher, Mrs. Christopher, were having their last conference together, and were discussing her final evaluation of his work. Mrs. Christopher had with her the evaluation checklist that the college requested cooperating teachers to fill out, and there was a line at the bottom for Clark to sign, merely indicating that he had read the evaluation. There were many categories on the checklist, and next to each item the student could be rated as poor, below average, average, above average, or superior. Mrs. Christopher had checked average or below average for most of the categories, and Clark didn't think that he deserved this low rating.

"I can't understand why you marked me average in provision for individual differences and for preparation," he said. "I always thought I did an adequate job in those areas."

"Well, you did, Clark. That's exactly what average means to me. You planned adequately and you made adequate provision for individual differences, but you weren't outstanding in those respects, which I take superior to mean, nor did I think you did anything out of the ordinary, which I think of as above average. Therefore, I am ranking you as an average student on both of those points."

"How about this below average in knowledge of subject matter. That really looks terrible."

"I'm sorry, Clark, but you remember that you had to learn most of the math we were using before you were ready to teach it, and you still had some difficulty. You had no background information on either of the countries we studied in history or geography, and you barely managed to keep ahead of the children. And I'm sure you haven't forgotten that more often than not, you couldn't answer the children's structure questions when they were writing their compositions."

"But it's been a long time since I've done anything with that subject matter. I know I'll get better as I go along."

"I hope you will, but in the meantime I have to say what your work was like in this classroom, and it was not good. I've had other students who had been away from these topics as long as you, but they did more research and background reading than you ever did. Some of them even came out to our class before they were scheduled to begin, to find out what they might do to prepare," replied Mrs. Christopher.

"Then you should have told me when I first arrived that I ought to start to prepare immediately," responded Clark.

"I don't believe that my job is to tell you how much work you should or should not do. You will put forth whatever effort you think is necessary, and I think that you're old enough now to make decisions yourself. You simply did not extend yourself enough, Clark, evidently because you didn't think it was worth the bother. And you know from my comments to you all along that I thought your work needed much improvement."

"Well, what about this average in relationships with children. I thought I had an excellent relationship with them."

"What makes you think that, Clark?"

"Because they liked me. They always wanted to hang around me and talk to me. I know they thought I was a good guy."

"Oh yes, they liked you in a way, but I think mainly because you didn't bother them too much with work—not because you did a good job of teaching. You had a kind of joking relationship with them. I did note down that you were above average

in cheerfulness and sense of humor, and I did say that your appearance was superior and that your voice and expression were above average. I also said that you had good relationships with the other staff members. But I'm afraid that you have a long way to go in the most important area of all—teaching competence!”

“But you know, average really means below average in student teaching. Everybody says that. A ‘C’ is like a ‘D’—so below average really means terrible. Well—I’ll bet Dr. Barrow will give me a ‘B.’ I don’t think you’ve been fair, but I’m going to sign this because it just means that I read what you wrote. Anyway, I know I’ll get a job, and that’s all that counts.”

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher disagrees with his cooperating teacher’s final evaluation of his work. We know that:

1. The student teacher doesn’t think he should have been rated average in the areas of provision for individual differences and preparation, because his work was adequate, but the cooperating teacher says that adequate work is only average work.
2. The student teacher objects to being rated below average in knowledge of subject matter, but the teacher says that his background was inadequate. When he replies that it had been a long time since he dealt with any of this subject matter, the teacher tells him that he should have put more effort into extending his background knowledge. The student says that she should have told him to begin preparing as soon as he arrived, but the teacher says it is not her job to tell him how much effort to exert.
3. When the student questions his rating of average in relationships with children, the teacher says that although

the children liked him, she believes this was mainly because he didn't bother them with much work. She notes that she rated him as above average in cheerfulness and sense of humor, and superior in appearance, voice and expression, and adds that he has a long way to go in the most important area of all—teaching competence.

4. The student says a 'C' in student teaching is comparable to a 'D' in any other course, that he doesn't think she has been fair, but that at any rate he thinks his college supervisor will give him a 'B,' and he'll get a job, and that's all that counts.

Some Issues

1. Why has it happened that in some colleges a 'C' in student teaching has the meaning of a 'D' in regular course work?
2. What does average mean? Does it mean adequate, usual, fair? In rating students at any level, from kindergarten up, how can account be taken of the fact that average performance differs from school to school?
3. How much help should a student teacher expect from his cooperating teacher in content areas? If cooperating teachers believe that the student should have been thoroughly prepared for his teaching by the college, or should manage on his own, how can students best handle this?
4. Why do many educators believe that a grade is not appropriate in student teaching? If a grade is given, who should have the major responsibility—the cooperating teacher or the college supervisor?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Since this cooperating teacher indicates that the student has known all along from her comments that she thought

his work needed much improvement, what concrete steps could he have taken to improve?

2. Suggest other ways that this student might have voiced his various disagreements with the cooperating teacher's rating.
3. Since it is undoubtedly true that this student will get a teaching position, what do you think of his statement that "that's all that counts"?

CASE 31

Perceptions

Miss FOSTER, Coordinator of Student Teaching, was looking over two evaluations that had just arrived in the mail. One came from Susan Winters, a student teacher, and the other had been sent in by Miss Fleischer, Susan's cooperating teacher. Both reports discussed Susan—or they both purported to discuss Susan—but after reading them, Miss Foster would have thought that Miss Winters' evaluation of Susan and Susan's self-evaluation were about two different people. Here is what the reports said:

Self-Evaluation: Susan Winters

I enjoyed every minute of my eight-week student teaching period in Miss Fleischer's first grade classroom. The children were lovely, and I think they responded well to my direction. I believe that I had a good manner with them, and I think that they liked working with me.

The subject matter areas in which I had an opportunity to work were reading, writing, arithmetic, games, music, art, science, and social studies. I instituted and carried through a unit on workers in the school and neighborhood, and I brought in many materials and resources for this unit. I think the children learned a great deal. I worked with all of the reading groups, plus a few of the children at the upper and lower end of the scale who needed special attention.

My plans were always shown to my cooperating teacher in advance, and I think that I was always well prepared for my work. In addition, I saw to it that the room was well kept and I was always mindful of the children's health and comfort. I was put in complete charge of all the classroom bulletin boards, and received many compliments on my work.

I believe that I did a good job in my student teaching, and I know that I learned a great deal.

Evaluation: Susan Winters

Cooperating Teacher: Miss Fleischer

Susan Winters spent eight weeks in my first grade classroom, but I am not sure of how much benefit she or the children derived from the experience. Miss Winters was usually unable to assert her authority, and the children took advantage of her rather sweet but ineffective manner. I almost always had to stay close at hand to be responsible for the discipline, while Susan taught.

She seemed to like the children—that is, she thought they were “cute”—but she couldn't really handle them effectively, and while they liked her, they regarded her as a kind of big sister rather than a teacher.

Miss Winters' plans were barely adequate, and she was never able to contribute much that was new or different. If there were a teacher's manual for an activity, she would follow that as closely as possible, without adding anything that was particularly applicable to our children. She handed in her plans on time.

Susan liked to keep the room neat and orderly, often seeming to prefer this to actually working with the children. She particularly liked to do bulletin boards, and asked to be put in charge of them. She spent a great deal of time on them, but hardly used the children or their work at all, though I kept suggesting this. Rather, she liked to do overly careful arrangements of things that she had cut out or made, and that she thought added much to the attractiveness of the room.

Her social studies unit on school and neighborhood workers was

most routine, and I doubt if the children had their concepts extended beyond the point where they were when she started.

I cannot recommend Miss Winters for a teaching job, because although she is a neat and attractive person, always on time, and has never shirked what she sees to be her responsibility, she is completely without the kind of creative initiative which a good teacher must have. In addition, her discipline is ineffectual to the point of nonexistence. I suggest that Miss Winters be steered into another field.

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student teacher's self-evaluation and the cooperating teacher's evaluation of this same student seem to be describing different people. We know that:

1. The student teacher says that the children responded well to her direction but the teacher says the student was unable to handle the class effectively.
2. The student thinks the children learned a great deal from the unit she taught, but the teacher says the unit was routine, and she doubts if the children had their concepts extended at all.
3. The student thinks she did a good job in her teaching and learned a great deal, but the teacher says her teaching was so poor that she, the teacher, cannot recommend the student for a teaching position.
4. The student says she was always well prepared for her teaching, but the teacher says her plans were barely adequate. Both agree that plans were handed in on time.
5. The student teacher says she was put in charge of bulletin boards and received many compliments on her work, but the teacher says the student asked to do them and spent a

great deal of time on them, but hardly used the children's work at all.

6. The student says she saw to it that the room was well kept, but the teacher says that the student seemed to prefer this kind of activity to working with children.

Some Issues

1. How can it happen that after eight weeks together a student and her cooperating teacher have such different perceptions of the quality of the student's work?
2. When students write self-evaluations that they know will be kept in their files and read by college teachers, and perhaps by future employers, how can they write objectively about their weaknesses without jeopardizing their careers? For example, how might a student teacher indicate that he had difficulty with discipline, or that he needs to acquire more knowledge or skill in the teaching of certain subject matter?
3. What can a student do if he realizes that he has failed in some important aspect of his teaching?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What are some of the ways in which this student teacher might have communicated with her cooperating teacher so that their perceptions of the quality of her teaching could have been more objectively in agreement?
2. How could the student's self-evaluation have been made more descriptively analytical rather than glowingly general?

VII

*Finding
a Teaching Position*

THE CULMINATION of course work and student teaching is, of course, the first day in one's own classroom. But before the student has a classroom of his own, he must find a job, and looking for a teaching position can present a variety of problems—from deciding where one wants to teach, or what grade one prefers, to how to respond to interview questions. The cases in this chapter discuss some of these problems.

CASE 32

The Interview

PAUL MORAN and Walter Carven were driving together to Washington Junior High School where both were to have an interview with Dr. Fallen, the school principal. Both of the boys were seniors at State University and both planned to teach in the fall. As they drove they talked about the coming interview, and both were a bit nervous, since neither had had an interview for a teaching position before.

"What do you suppose he'll ask us, Paul?" queried Walter. "I wish I had some idea of what kinds of questions we'll get."

"Oh, I guess he'll ask us something about our student teaching experiences, and perhaps something about our philosophies of education. And he might ask us what provisions we would make for slow children or fast children in our classes—I know another student who was asked that question last week. Any-

way, I think we're well prepared; and the role playing we did in class one week about job interviews helped me. I feel pretty competent about answering questions."

"I suppose you're right. It's best to just say what we think, I guess," responded Walter. "And remember, there was some suggestion about having a few questions of our own ready. I wonder what the beginning salary is there—I don't even know. And we could also ask about class size, and special teachers, and so forth."

"Well, here we are, so the worst will soon be over. Shall we decide who should go in first, or shall we just leave it to fate?" asked Paul as he parked the car.

"Let's just leave it to fate," replied Walter.

The boys entered the school and found the office, where they were greeted by the secretary, who told them that Dr. Fallen was expecting them. The principal came out, welcomed them, and suggested that Paul come in first.

"Now, Mr. Moran, why don't you just sit here and make yourself comfortable," said Dr. Fallen when they were inside his office. "I see by your record that you have done student teaching in the sixth and eighth grades, and that both of your cooperating teachers thought you did well. Now, tell me something about your outside interests."

"I like most sports," replied Paul, "but I don't have much time for them now, I'm afraid. I do hope to continue with my golf, though. And I read quite a bit, in a wide variety of subjects; but at the moment my main interest is teaching. I'm eager to get started in my own classroom."

"I suppose that's natural," replied Dr. Fallen. "Why did you decide to become a teacher?"

"I had a high school social studies teacher who strongly influenced me, I guess. I liked him so much—all of the kids did—and he was terrific. He interested me in things I hadn't cared about before, and I talked to him about teaching. He encouraged me when I said I thought I'd like to go into teaching, but he made sure he told me of the disadvantages as well as the advantages. Then, after I got to college and took a few educa-

tion courses and did some observing in schools, I was completely convinced—and here I am.”

“I don’t think you’ll be sorry, either. Now, how do you feel about discipline in the classroom?” asked Dr. Fallen.

“I’ll tell you,” responded Paul, “I differentiate between punishment and discipline. I hope that I won’t be a teacher who punishes children, but at the same time I know that if I don’t have control of the classroom, I’ll never be able to teach. I don’t believe in things like keeping children after school, unless it’s to help them with their work, or talk over their problems. I expect children to do as I ask, but I expect to keep my requests within reason, and I want the children to know me as a fair person. I don’t believe in punishing the whole class for the misdemeanors of a few children, and mainly I believe that classroom control derives from the curriculum. That is, if the children are interested and busy with challenging work there will be few problems.”

“A good response,” said Dr. Fallen. “We have several other teachers here from State, and they’ve worked out well in our school. We believe in hiring teachers who are well prepared and competent, and then we give them pretty free rein—with some guidance, of course. Your record is excellent, and your grades are good. We’re looking for intelligent young people, because we don’t believe that teachers can do a good job unless they have brains. I’d like you to spend some time looking over our school, and then come back and talk further with me. Our assistant principal is eager to meet you, and she will show you around the building.” And Dr. Fallen ushered Paul out, and brought Walter into his office.

“Come in, Mr. Carven, and make yourself comfortable,” began Dr. Fallen. “I see that you have done your student teaching in a fifth grade and a seventh grade. You seem to have done well in both of those assignments. Now, tell me, what are your outside interests?”

“Well, I played in the college orchestra, and I have some interest in music. And I play golf with Paul, as he may have mentioned. Why—will we be expected to supervise extracurricular

activities here? I hope the load won't be too heavy, if we do. During my first year, I'd like to concentrate on my teaching as much as possible."

"We do have some extracurricular activities for teachers, but we seldom ask a first-year teacher to become involved. What made you decide to become a teacher, Mr. Carven?"

"Well, I wasn't sure of what I wanted to major in, but I knew I was particularly interested in the social sciences. I decided to minor in education, since I knew I wouldn't be able to go on to graduate school right away, and I knew that teachers were in demand. I liked my student teaching, and I was glad I made the decision to teach. I think I might like to go into administration, eventually. By the way, I want to ask you about the chances in administration. Is it true that in order to become a principal in an elementary school it's better to have taught in one?"

"I think the chances are good for qualified people in administration," replied Dr. Fallen, "and I do believe that more and more school districts are requiring elementary school teaching experience of their administrators. Of course, there are many more openings for administrators in elementary schools, and if that's what you think you are most interested in, then you might do well to get in some teaching at that level. Now, tell me, how do you feel about discipline in the classroom?"

"I'm all for it," replied Walter. "I don't think kids should think they can run things. I believe that children should be expected to obey their elders and I never had any trouble with discipline in my student teaching. I just let the kids know who was boss, and that was that. If there was any fooling around I just stopped it then and there. I think that kids today are confused about what's expected of them, and I believe in letting them know what I expect, and in sticking to the letter of the law once it's laid down."

"I see," said Dr. Fallen. "Well, Mr. Carven, I'm not sure of how many openings we will have this coming year—very few, I'm afraid. But you may hear from me later if anything develops. Perhaps, since you seem interested in administration, you *should* particularly concentrate on the elementary school. Your

friend, Mr. Moran, is looking about the school, and when he finishes he's coming back in to speak to me. In the meantime, why don't you just wait in the outer office for him. He won't be too long. Thank you for coming in."

COMMENTS

The Problem

Two students are interviewed for teaching positions by a principal who asks them the same questions, but with different results. We know that:

1. Neither student has ever been interviewed before, and they are somewhat apprehensive as they discuss possible interview questions.
2. The principal asks each student about his outside interests, why he decided to become a teacher, and how he feels about discipline in the classroom.
3. The different responses of the students apparently will assure one of a position, and put the other out of the running.

Some Issues

1. What sort of principal might have reversed the hiring procedure, given these same candidates and their same responses?
2. Are administrators likely to be more impressed by certain reasons for selecting teaching as a profession? Does the reason for making a professional choice have any effect on the quality of work one will produce in that profession?
3. How can students prepare for job interviews, or is it best to respond naturally and extemporaneously to whatever questions are asked?

4. What kinds of questions are appropriate for students to ask prospective employers during job interviews?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Suggest other responses for each of the principal's interview questions.
2. What are some of the things that the student who got the job might say to the student who was rejected?

CASE 33

I Want the Job

ANDREA KERN planned to be married a few days after her graduation from college, and she wanted to be able to teach in the town where she and her husband would be living. There was only one school in the town, the Northpoint School, and Andrea had been told by the principal that there were two openings, and that in view of her fine academic and student teaching record, he would be glad to interview her.

Andrea did have a good college record. She had been a leader both academically and in extracurricular activities. She was a fine musician, a creative person, and one who loved people. She had done her student teaching in a second grade and a sixth grade, and had shown herself to be a fine teacher in both grades. In fact, both of the school systems where she had been a student teacher had offered her jobs, but her fiancé was already settled in the town where they would be living, and no other town was within easy commuting distance.

On the day of the interview at Northpoint, Andrea was taken around the school, which had thirteen classrooms, and was welcomed politely by all of the teachers, and by the principal. But she wasn't too impressed by what she saw. All the classrooms had the children seated in carefully lined rows, with the teacher's desk plunk in the middle of the front of the room. The

children all stood when they 'recited,' and there was a formal and strict air about the school that didn't appeal to Andrea.

After the tour of the school, Andrea and the principal, Mr. Murkland, went to his office to talk. "Now, Miss Kern, you see what our school is like," he said. "We are primarily interested in basic education—the sound teaching of the skills. We expect our teachers to be firm disciplinarians, and we don't like frills. Our parents expect the kind of education we give, and we believe that we provide the children with a good background for their later learning. Do you have any particular questions you would like to ask me?"

"Well, Mr. Murkland," asked Andrea, "what basal series do you use in reading, and just how do you use them?"

"We use the Brand Series exclusively, and we expect every child to have read through the two books on his grade level before he can progress to the next grade—with an occasional exception, of course. We do have a school library for the children's use, and each class has a library period once a week. The extent to which the teachers use extra library reading is up to them, but in the first three grades we require the reading groups to meet twice each day; once in the morning and once in the afternoon. We use the View-and-Learn phonics system, and this is particularly stressed in the first two grades. And we do insist on three groups in reading. We have found that there is simply not adequate time for more than that if each child is to receive enough drill."

Andrea's heart sank while she listened. Things had been so different in her student teaching. There had been a great deal of freedom, and both of the schools had used three or four basal reading series, as well as extensive library reading. The groups didn't even have to meet once a day, let alone twice, if something were deemed more important by the teacher. Reading was viewed as an integral part of the school day—and as a tool, not an end in itself. She decided to ask about the rest of the program. "You said that one of the openings was in the sixth grade. I wondered about the social studies program at that level," she inquired.

"We have our social studies separated into history and geography periods—history three times a week, and geography, twice. We review the United States, and cover South America and Canada. Our units are worked out in advance, and we follow them closely. The time schedule is all set up for you, and all you have to do is stick to it."

Andrea felt depressed at the thought of teaching in a school like this. She was used to an emerging curriculum, within broad guidelines, and she was used to having the day flow as seemed appropriate according to the content and the children, not according to some predetermined time schedule. She thought to herself that this school was really set up for clerks, rather than creative teachers. This was not what she had looked forward to in teaching, nor what she had been prepared for in her college work. But she knew that Tom, her fiancé, wanted her to teach at Northpoint, and that the next town was twenty-five miles away. They couldn't afford a second car, even if she wanted to drive that distance twice every day.

"Now, Miss Kern, your record is very good, and you seem to be a capable person. I know that many young people go into teaching expecting to revolutionize the field of education, but my experience has shown that these people just cause trouble and usually fall flat on their faces. If you are willing to accept us as we are, and if you are willing to fit into our system, then I am prepared to offer you the sixth grade job," said Mr. Murkland. "You'll get all the help you need from the rest of us, but you must understand that you will have to accommodate yourself to us, and not expect our system to change to fit you. You can have a week to think things over if you like."

"Well, I will admit that this school is somewhat different from the ones in which I did my student teaching—but I want the job. I'm willing to accommodate myself to your school as you put it, and I'd like to accept right now, if I may," said a far-from-happy Andrea.

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student accepts a job in a school that is convenient to her future home, even though she does not approve of the school's curriculum or atmosphere. We know that:

1. The student will be married and will live in a town that has only one school, and is not near any other town.
2. The student has an interview in this school and is unfavorably impressed with its strict and formal air.
3. She does not approve of the way in which the curriculum and methods are determined for the teacher, and thinks that this kind of school is set up for clerks rather than creative teachers—and she had looked forward to becoming a creative teacher.
4. The principal offers her a job, but makes it clear that she must accommodate herself to the school, and not expect the system to change to fit her.
5. The student accepts the job.

Some Issues

1. What are some of the consequences of limiting one's self to one or two choices when looking for a teaching position?
2. What kinds of decisions should teachers expect to make in their own classrooms, and what kinds should be made by others?
3. In what ways should teachers expect to accommodate themselves to the school systems in which they accept positions?

4. What responsibility do teachers have to work for what they consider to be desirable change in the school systems within which they teach?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. In what ways can this student continue to be a creative teacher rather than a clerk, working within this system?
2. Is there anything the student could have done if she had refused this job?
3. Should the student have indicated any of her misgivings about the school to the principal?

CASE 34

A Decent School

JOANNA WHELAN had been a student teacher in the Lincoln School in a slum area, and the experience had been a rewarding one for her. Her cooperating teacher, Miss Glazer, had been marvelous—she had really understood the children, and she did wonderful things with them and for them. Miss Glazer's curriculum was designed to fit her class—not children in a third grade in a rural area, nor children in a third grade in an average middle-class area, but third graders in that particular poor and deprived section of the city. She had designed reading materials and other curriculum materials to fit the children's interests and capabilities, and while she accepted them for what they were, she lifted their horizons and carried them far beyond their starting points. Miss Glazer was accomplishing more, thought Joanna, than most teachers in the so-called better schools, and with a greater sense of reward and fulfillment.

Oh, certainly the children were difficult, and progress didn't occur overnight. But the children looked forward to school and to learning, and they had accepted Joanna as they did Miss

Glazer—as a person who liked and respected them and who was there to help them learn.

After this experience, Joanna had spent a month in an upper-middle-class neighborhood school, and now she was absolutely convinced that she wanted to teach in an underprivileged neighborhood.

There were no second or third grade openings in the Lincoln School, so Joanna applied at two other schools in deprived neighborhoods, and she looked forward to her interviews. She was pretty sure she would get a job in one of the schools, because her grades and her record was good, and also because most teachers tried to escape from these schools—not get into them.

One night some of the girls in the dorm were talking about where they hoped to teach the next year, and when Joanna said she was applying in the River District of town, most of the others were surprised.

"I think you're making a mistake to seek out that district during your first year of teaching," said Ann Haynes. "I know that you did your student teaching down there, but you were lucky to be with an excellent teacher. Next year you'll be completely on your own, and the kids in that section have turned a lot of people away from teaching for good. I just don't think we have the skills during our first year of teaching to be able to cope with all of the behavior problems that those children have. All you have to do is walk through one of those schools and hear some of the teachers screaming at the kids, and you can see what teaching in a place like that can do to a person."

"I'm afraid I agree with Ann," said Belinda Thatcher. "You know yourself how most of the teachers in those schools feel. They just look upon their work as putting in time until they can ask for a transfer to a decent school. You're getting yourself into a real blackboard jungle, and I think you're just asking for trouble. I'm not saying that those children don't need good teachers. They probably need the best. But you're too new, and you won't have Miss Glazer to help you—or anyone else, probably—and you might turn into one of the screamers,

too. I'm sure that none of the mean teachers in those schools decided to be that way beforehand. They probably had high ideals once, too. But the work is just too hard for a novice."

"I think I can do it," replied Joanna. "Naturally I've thought about all of the things you've said, and I know it won't be easy. But I don't think that's any reason for shirking. I think I can help these kids, and I want to try."

"All right, so you feel like a missionary, and that's very commendable," said Belinda. "But why not start out in an easier school in a decent part of town, and then when you get your bearings, you can easily transfer. Remember, your Miss Glazer has had about ten years of experience with these children. After you've had some experience in teaching, then you'll be *ready* to teach in that neighborhood."

"I don't think you should discourage Joanna like this," Sara Shore joined in. "I'm going to be teaching in the Peace Corps next year, and everyone tells me how wonderful I am, and how exciting it will be. Well, I think that what Joanna wants to do isn't so different—and probably is even more commendable, just because people *don't* tell her how wonderful she is. Her school will have more textbooks than mine, and a better building, but the challenge will be just as great, if not greater. I think we should be encouraging Joanna, not discouraging her."

"I'm not saying that teaching in the River District isn't a challenge," retorted Ann. "I know those kids need help. All I'm saying is that I don't think any of us are ready for that kind of work. We're still learning. And I'd hate to see someone as capable as Joanna leave teaching because of a miserable initial experience. All of you knew John Ray and Debbie Reilly. Well, they both felt as Joanna does, and both of them were out of teaching by last November. Maybe they'll go back this year, someplace else; but I don't think we should look for trouble. You know, Joanna, I did some student teaching in Lincoln, too, but my teacher wasn't any Miss Glazer. The kids made her life miserable. Once she even ran out of the room crying. And do you think the kids felt sorry for her? They were proud that they'd gotten the best of the teacher! I've seen too much evi-

dence that shows that new teachers just can't handle these kids. That's why I think Joanna should take a job in a decent school, at least for the first year."

COMMENTS

The Problem

A student decides to apply for a teaching position in a difficult school in a deprived neighborhood, but some other students try to dissuade her. We know that:

1. The student had a rewarding student teaching experience in a poor neighborhood, and also did some student teaching in an upper-middle-class neighborhood. She is convinced that she wants to teach underprivileged children.
2. Another student says that she is making a mistake because she is not yet skilled enough to handle these children on her own. Others say that without the proper experience and skills one should not try to teach underprivileged children, and the fact that so many of the teachers in these schools become harsh with the children, even though they probably once had high ideals, should caution her. It is also pointed out that many teachers just look upon these schools as places to serve time until they can be transferred, and that some new teachers who take jobs in slum schools leave teaching entirely, because they cannot cope with the children.
3. A student who is going to teach in the Peace Corps says that the student who wants to teach in the slums should be encouraged, not discouraged, and that the desire to teach deprived children is most commendable.
4. The reply from another student is that while teaching in difficult situations may be a challenge, and certainly the children need help, new teachers are not capable of giving that help.

Some Issues

1. Should new teachers be encouraged to work with difficult children, or is it true that their skills are still too weak for this work?
2. Why is it considered to be more difficult to teach children in underprivileged neighborhoods?
3. How much can the content of the curriculum affect the type of experience a teacher will have working with children in a slum neighborhood?
4. What special skills might be needed for teachers who work in schools in these neighborhoods?
5. Why do you think the chances are rather slim that teachers will move into the slum schools after a year or two of experience in a "decent" school?
6. Why is it that people who presumably begin their teaching careers with high ideals sometimes become teachers who seem not to enjoy their work, and who are unkind to children?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. What else might the student who wants to teach underprivileged children have said to the others to persuade them that she was making a good choice?
2. What specific things can this student do to prepare herself further for the work she wants to do?

CASE 35

The Switch

THE PHONE rang and Grace Quenton picked it up and said hello. A voice on the other end said, "Hello, Miss Quenton? This is Mrs. Gordon. I'm afraid I have some news for you that may upset you, but there's really nothing I was able to do to avoid the situation. When you were hired to teach first grade last May, our faculty was all set, and everything seemed so definite. But last week one of our fifth grade teachers was forced to resign because of ill health and I simply haven't been able to find any qualified teacher to replace him. As you know, school will open in two weeks, and the only thing I *was* able to do was to persuade the first grade teacher whom you were going to replace, Mrs. Cotton, to postpone her retirement for one year and return to the first grade. So I have to ask you to take the fifth grade."

"Oh, but Mrs. Gordon, she has so many more years of experience than I, and I've been preparing all summer for the first grade. Why I never did any student teaching except in first grade, and I don't know anything about fifth grade!"

"I know that this is upsetting to you, Miss Quenton, but I simply can't ask Mrs. Cotton to take anything but a first grade. I was lucky to persuade her to come back for a year, and I had a hard time doing that. I know she won't go to any other grade. And we'll give you all the help you need. The other fifth grade teacher will be glad to help all she can, and I'll give you all of my spare time. Teaching is teaching you know, and children are children. I'm sure you'll be able to handle everything. After all, the principles of teaching and learning are the same for all ages."

"Well, Mrs. Gordon, I just don't know what to say. I know it's late in the year, and I understand your plight—but couldn't one of the other lower grade teachers switch instead of me?" asked Grace.

"I just can't ask them to, Miss Quenton. They are all used to their grades and their rooms, and they will say that it will be easier for you to make the change, since you really haven't started yet, than for them to readjust," replied Mrs. Gordon.

"But I'm so prepared for the first grade, and I just don't know if I can teach fifth graders. Can I please think about this for a day and call you in your office tomorrow morning?" asked Grace mournfully.

COMMENTS

The Problem

A young lady who was hired to teach a first grade finds out two weeks before school opens that she has been switched to an upper grade. We know that:

1. The new teacher has prepared all summer for her first-grade assignment, and has done her student teaching entirely in a first grade.
2. Two weeks before the opening of school the principal calls to say that, because of unforeseen circumstances, the new teacher will have to be switched to a fifth grade. The principal promises all possible help and support, and points out that the principles of teaching and learning are the same for all ages.
3. The new teacher suggests other possibilities, but the principal says that this is the only thing she can do. The new teacher asks if she can think the situation over for a day and call the principal back.

Some Issues

1. If a student teacher has experience in only one grade in elementary school, is it true that he is prepared to teach in any other elementary grade?

2. What are the reasons why the principal changes the new teacher rather than the more experienced ones?
3. In what ways might the new teacher be better prepared to teach the fifth grade than the teacher being recalled from retirement? In what ways might the more experienced teacher be more qualified to handle the fifth grade?

Questions for Discussing Alternate Courses of Action

1. Would this student be justified in looking for another job?
2. Suggest reasons why the student should accept the change graciously.



